

International Opportunities Experienced by SUNY Upstate Students

(Compiled as of: 10/29/07)

Latin America

SalvaSpan.

<http://spanishmd.homestead.com/>

Santa Ana, El Salvador. (I recommend staying in Santa Ana, with the owner's family (Nelson Pacheco).

During the summer between MS1 and MS2, I lived in El Salvador. For the first two weeks, I attended a Medical Spanish program in Santa Ana, a medium-sized Salvadoran city, to brush up on my Spanish (which I had not used since high school!). My experience with my host family (the owners of the language school) was incredible, and I remain in daily contact with them to this day. The full-immersion process permitted me to learn and practice my Spanish, and gain an appreciation for Salvadoran culture, while touring medical facilities, visiting ancient Mayan ruins, climbing the Izalco Volcano, and more. After my stay with the language school, I spent 2 weeks in La Isla, a rural village in the mountains without access to health care. The itinerary of this project was self-organized, but with help through a contact from the organization Mu-jeres. In La Isla, we set up a diabetes and hypertension screening clinic. We also provided first aid services. Overall, my experience in El Salvador was incredibly rewarding and I highly recommend it, especially to a group of interested first year students. Please contact me before going - I have much more advice to offer (as well as my Salvadoran cell phone to call home with!). Also - I did receive Upstate elective credits for this trip!!!

Timeframe: 4 week summer '07

Contact information: Christopher Pray, '10 (prayc@upstate.edu)

PACEMedSpanish

www.medspanish.com

San Miguel de Allende, Mexico

This is a great learning experience for people who want to brush up on their Spanish skills as well as have direct clinical experience in an international health care setting. You participate in one-on-one medical Spanish classes everyday as well as spend time in clinics, hospitals, and with the Red Cross ambulance service where almost no English is spoken, forcing you to be immersed in the language while interacting with doctors and patients. San Miguel is a beautiful city with lots of cultural activities!

Timeframe: We went for three weeks, but any amount of time is ok.

Contact: Caitlin Bernard, '10 (bernardc@upstate.edu)

Primeros Pasos

<http://www.primerospasos.psiguatemala.org/>

Quetzaltenango, Guatemala

During my stay in Guatemala, I attended Spanish classes for five hours per day, five days per week for four weeks. My Spanish classes consisted of a review of grammar, lessons on vocabulary related to medicine and lectures on the history and culture of Guatemala. I also volunteered at a medical clinic located on the outskirts of Quetzaltenango. For four hours per day, five days per week for three weeks, I volunteered at the Primeros Pasos medical clinic in Tierra Colorada. Primeros Pasos is a medical clinic devoted primarily to providing healthcare for school children. At the clinic, I worked with other medical students from the United States, New Zealand and Guatemala, nurses from California and a doctor from Guatemala. In groups of two or three, we took medical histories and conducted physical exams. Volunteering at Primeros Pasos was an excellent learning opportunity. I was able to practice speaking Spanish, learned a great deal of vocabulary associated with medicine and discovered many differences between the practice of medicine in the United States and Guatemala. My experience in Guatemala has allowed me to strengthen my understanding of both the Spanish language and the practice of medicine in a developing country

Timeframe: 6/17 - 7/25, 2006

Contact information: Chad Cornish, '09 (cornishc@upstate.edu)

Coffee Finca, Public Health Project

San Marcos district, Guatemala

A working, ecologically friendly coffee finca in the San Marcos district on the pacific coast of Guatemala put me up for two months. The owner of the farm is also an anthropologist with a background in public health, and he helped me to design a Spanish language survey designed to assess the poor ladinos' usage of the various public health resources in the area. The farm provided food and lodging, and has stated they would be more than happy to have more medical students return to do basic public health research. In the town, there is a small centro de salud (health center) responsible for providing health care to roughly 12,000 impoverished residents. If you are interested in a cultural experience living amongst people

who live on less than seven dollars a day and witnessing the health care environment they live in, I can provide more details (hahnw@upstate.edu). Also, all the high-quality coffee you can drink (retails for like \$20 a pound stateside)."

Timeframe: Summer 2005

Contact information: Will Hahn, '08 (hahnw@upstate.edu)

Univ of Nebraska Medical School -Guatemala

<http://www.unmc.edu/isp/studyabroad/medicspanishcourse.htm>

Antigua, Guatemala

It is a credit-bearing course (i.e., you can transfer the credit here, and thus, you can get financial aid for it! (In fact, they covered my ENTIRE trip... I'll be happy to explain the steps needed later))

the purpose of the course is medical Spanish. You'll spend 3 weeks in Antigua, taking private tutoring lessons from "San Jose - El Viejo" language school, along w/ home-stay w/ a local family. The purpose is COMPLETE Spanish immersion (I went there w/ no prior Spanish knowledge... and now my Spanish is comparable to the 7yrs of French I took in high school/college) You'll have various trips scheduled on the weekends, along w/ lectures on Guatemalan history, medical delivery, etc. Then for the last week, you'll spend time in the rural country-sides of Guatemala, setting up health clinics for the poor, indigenous Mayans... practicing your Spanish the whole time, while caring for real patients!

This was an AMAZING EXPERIENCE, and I can't say enough about it! My language skills improved DRAMATICALLY, and the clinical opportunities were nothing like what I experienced in medical school so far. (Not to mention that Guatemala is such a beautiful country... nothing like summiting a volcano, swimming in the Caribbean, and climbing a couple Mayan temples all within weeks of each other!!!)

Timeframe: July 23-Aug 20, 2006

Contact information: Andy Poreda, '09 (poredaa@upstate.edu)

Pop Wuj

<http://www.pop-wuj.org/>

Quetzaltenango (Xela), Guatemala

Asociación Centro de Estudios de Español Pop Wuj (pronounced "pope-woo"), set in highland Guatemala, is a collectively owned and operated Spanish language school that has been serving an international crowd of students since our immersion program began in 1992. Through a unique mix of intensive language study and social service projects, students come to a better understanding of the political, social, and cultural realities of Guatemala, while contributing to a better way of life for families in the rural areas surrounding Quetzaltenango. Working side by side with their teachers and community members, students have found themselves moved and inspired by their experiences here at Pop Wuj both in the classroom and in the community environments. Centro Pop Wuj is a cooperative wholly owned by the teaching staff. After the teachers draw a modest wage and take care of expenses, the remaining income is dedicated to financing the thriving rural development projects and educational endeavors that the school has undertaken and nurtured over the past ten years. Our teaching style is one-on-one. The formal classes in Spanish are given four and a half hours a day, five days a week. During the rest of the day and in the evening, the school offers a variety of activities that are designed to teach you something about Guatemalan and Latin American culture.

Quetzaltenango, Guatemala is known among Guatemalans by its Quiche name Xela (Shay-la), the city is situated in a mountain valley at an altitude of 7500 feet, amid spectacular peaks and volcanoes. During our time in Xela, we stayed with a friendly and accommodating host family arranged by the school. It was an excellent way to use our Spanish outside of school and also offered personal insight into the Guatemalan culture. Xela is located in the western highlands of Guatemala, and a number of buses leave from the bus depot on a daily basis, making it a great jumping off point for both day and weekend trips.*Also checkout: Quetzal Trekkers, <http://www.quetzaltrekkers.com/>

Timeframe: Programs run on a weekly basis, and can be a monthly long. The programs include an immersion program, Medical/Healthcare, and Social Work/Community Development.

Contact information: Elizabeth Dawson, '09 dawsone@upstate.edu, Danielle Yerdon, '09 yerdond@upstate.edu, Andrea Shaw '08, shawa@upstate.edu

Glen Falls Medical Mission

<http://gfmmf.org/>

Nueva Santa Rosa, Guatemala

Glen Falls Medical Mission Foundation holds twice yearly week long medical missions (one in the Fall and the other in the Spring) to Nueva Santa Rosa, a small rural town in Southern Guatemala. Basically, GFMMF creates a makeshift clinic covering services in general medicine, pediatrics, gynecology, dentistry, optometry, pharmacy, as well as general health/hygiene educational services with a team of about 45 volunteers. I had the opportunity to participate in October 2003 and October 2004 (as an undergraduate) dispensing medicines in pharmacy, working as a translator in the

clinics, as well as working in triage.

Medical students worked in the clinics (supervised by providers) and saw patients (averaging up to about 30-50 patients per day per provider). Translators were provided for each health provider (so one's lack of Spanish speaking skills is not a limiting factor!) Overall, it was a great experience!

Contact information: Roslyn Chang, '09 (ChangR@upstate.edu)

Light of the World Missions

www.lotwmisions/truepath.com/

Belize

This is a Christian group who has been taking medical students and health professionals down to Belize to work in free clinics for 12 years now. As I said, it is a Christian organization but your religious association is not even discussed throughout the trip. We spent one week down in the southern portion of the country working in different Mayan villages. We brought all of our own supplies and drugs, and would usually set up a "clinic" in empty community buildings or churches. I saw my own patients, and learned to do a number of minor procedures. The second week of the trip was spent on the island of Caye Caulker. We worked in an established clinic. We worked all day while on the island, but there was lots of time for swimming and snorkeling, etc. after work. I would highly recommend this trip to anyone who is looking to travel, but also wants to give back to others less fortunate than themselves. I was totally immersed in the Belizean culture, and I gained a lot of hands on medical experience.

Timeframe: I went to Belize for two weeks this summer (at the end of July).

Contact information: Amy Biondich, '09 (biondica@upstate.edu)

Child Family Health International

www.cfhi.org

Mission: Child Family Health International (CFHI) is a global family of committed professionals and students who work at the grassroots level to promote the health of the world community.

A major goal is to advance quality healthcare for all. What this program does:

- foster learning and service that sparks transformational personal change for all involved
- work to achieve sustainable solutions in healthcare services and disease prevention
- emphasize respect and understanding across cultures
- facilitate the sharing of medical resources, knowledge, and experience
- give priority to underserved communities

I volunteered for 8 weeks in the Pediatric Health program in La Paz, Bolivia in July and August of 2004 and had an amazing time. CFHI takes care of all the details such as arranging a homestay, enrolling students in language programs (if needed), arranging medical volunteer opportunities and provides discussions on health and social topics specific to the country. I volunteered at 4 different sites: Hospital del Nino (public children's hospital); Hospital Maternal Infantil (private birthing and children's hospital); Hospital Arco Iris (private hospital catering to the underserved) and their mobile clinics traveling to public schools and the homeless communities; and Alalay (residential housing and skills training for former street children). I would definitely recommend this program, please contact me or their office if you have any questions.

Time frame: The program typically runs for 4 weeks and half and full scholarships are available for Sept-Nov and Feb-May. The entire list of programs includes:

Amazon Community Medicine in Ecuador

Andean Health in Quito, Ecuador

Biomedical Research in Nicaragua

Cultural Crossroads in Health in Oaxaca, Mexico

Healthcare Challenges in South Africa

Infectious Disease in Mumbai, India

Introduction to Traditional Medicine, India

Pediatric Health in La Paz, Bolivia

Reproductive Health in Quito, Ecuador

Rural Himalayan Rotation, India

Tropical Medicine on the Coast of Mexico

Urban Rural Comparative Health, Ecuador

HIV and Public Health Challenges in India

HIV/AIDS and Healthcare in Durban, South Africa

Contact Information: Danielle Yerdon, '09 (yerdond@upstate.edu)

Institute for Central American Development Studies (ICADS)

<http://www.icadscr.com>

Costa Rica and Nicaragua

ICADS is a center for study, research, and analysis of Central American social and environmental issues. They focus on women's issues, economic development, environmental studies, public health, education, human rights, and wildlife conservation. ICADS offers four separate and distinct study programs through which students can earn academic credit as a study abroad program for their university), take intensive Spanish language coursework and volunteer in any number of internships we have available in Costa Rica and Nicaragua

When I was there, I participated in the Semester Internship Program, where I lived with a homestay family in Costa Rica for 1 month while taking intensive Spanish language classes (great classes, and no college Spanish required!). I then lived with a family in Nicaragua for 2 months, during which time I had an internship through a local NGO giving classes (in Spanish) to men and women in the surrounding rural communities about the male and female reproductive systems, nutrition, and birth control. I also arranged and co-taught a mask-making workshop for local children as an attempt for sustainable economic income. I highly recommend the program – you arrange your own personal internship with their help based on your interests. They have a lot of contacts, and are helpful, flexible, and extremely personable. They have summer programs as well.

Timeframe: 2/03-4/03 (during the spring semester of my junior year in college)
Contact information: Lauren Schlanger, '09 (Lauren.Schlanger@gmail.com)

Mosoq Ayllu ("New Community" in Quechuan)

<http://www.mosoq-ayllu.org.pe/>

Huancayo, Peru

I worked for two weeks in Huancayo, Peru in the Andes. While there I did a range of volunteer activities, but the main focus was work at a health clinic outside of Huancayo in the village of Chupaca. I assisted with some basic medical procedures (e.g. cleaning wounds, suturing) and worked with the doctors on some clinical encounters. We also did vaccinations and public health work at local schools. A great experience in a different "medical culture". Spanish is not required, but is very helpful.

*Note: I was possibly going to work with another organization in Bolivia and have the contact info on them as well: Curamericas -
<http://www.curamericas.org/index.html>

Timeframe: Summer 2006
Contact information: Stephen Weinberger, '09 (weinbers@upstate.edu)

Emergency Department –Ecuador

I spent the summer between first and second year of medical school in Ambato, Ecuador volunteering in the ER of the regional hospital. This experience was through an organization called Foundation for a Sustainable Development that sponsors a variety of such programs throughout the world. I certainly think this experience would be available to students. It's a tremendous experience to observe and live with people of a different culture and given the growing Hispanic population in the US, the skills I learned during this experience have already been used many, many times. I think everyone would benefit from a program like this
Contact information: Amy Sucheski, '06 (sucheska@upstate.edu)

Caribbean

The DREAM (Dominican Republic Education and Mentoring) Project

<http://www.dominicandream.org/>

Cabarete, Dominican Republic and Ithaca, NY

The Dominican Republic Education And Mentoring (DREAM) Project is a US 501c3 nonprofit organization that provides equitable access to quality education for children born into poverty in rural areas and small communities of the Dominican Republic by combining volunteerism, international awareness, and community involvement into a sustainable support system.

During January 2004, 14 students and 2 advisors from the Public Service Center at Cornell University worked on the construction of a school called "La Libertad" (Freedom) for a month in Sabaneta de Yasica, DR. <http://www.dominicandream.org/current-projects/libertad.php> We helped with all aspects of the construction for carrying cement blocks, and mixing cement, to painting the roof and shoveling fill. We worked with a Dominican contractor and his team, and we learned a lot of new Spanish construction vocabulary and more about the culture. The classroom serves children in the community who would not otherwise be able to attend school because of the expense of supplies and school uniforms. A second team of students returned the following year to landscape, and start a community garden at the school. We stayed with Paulina Tremblay a native Canadian during our time in the DR. She is an amazing woman who over 20 years has adopted over 30 Dominican children, who she has raised as her own,

and has done substantial work in helping to develop the community. She can always use help at her home – Jardin de los Ninos (the garden of the children).

Timeframe: January 2004

Student contact information: Elizabeth Dawson, '09 (dawsone@upstate.edu) or Danielle Yerdon, '09 (verdond@upstate.edu)

Response Ability

www.ravolunteers.org

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

After graduating from undergrad., I deferred my medical school acceptance and decided to do volunteer work for a year with a group called Response-Ability in the Dominican Republic. This small organization has education programs (the volunteers teach in underprivileged schools) in several U.S. cities, but only one international site- the D.R. As a volunteer I lived with 4 other female volunteers and 4 Catholic nuns. It was not required that you are Catholic, or even very religious- just open to the idea of faith and spirituality and how they intertwine with the work you do everyday. We taught in a small school to very impoverished children of Dominican and Haitian decent. There is a lot more information on the website.

Timeframe: 1 year

Contact information: Cassie Stack, '09 (stackc@upstate.edu)

Africa

Uganda Village Project

<http://www.ifmsa-usa.org/UVP/>

(via IFMSA)

Southeastern Uganda

I participated in a 6 week summer volunteer program in Southeastern Uganda with the Uganda Village Project through the International Federation of Medical Students. Our main projects were teaching villages and schools about public health issues like HIV/AIDS, Sanitation, Nutrition, Family Planning, Malaria, etc. We also ran free medical clinics to provide basic care in rural areas. These were run by the medical students, pharmacists, and doctors from the USA on the trip. There were 6 of them during the stay in Uganda for 2 days each. Lastly we provided some services like medical supply donation, clothing donation, and protection of water sources. I am currently a member of the E-board and participate in the planning and organizing though I will not be returning this summer. This experience is and will be available to others. It is also expanding so that it will be available year round as well. It accepts all kinds of people into the program, not just medical students

Timeframe: 6 weeks, summer 2004

Contact information: Amy Saleh, '07 (saleha@upstate.edu)

Volunteer Kenya

www.volunteerkenya.org

(via IFMSA, www.ifmsa.org)

Bungoma, Kenya

I spent 5 weeks volunteering for their mobile health clinic. It was sent in the town of Bungoma, in the western province of Kenya. Each day we would travel to a different village and set up clinic in a school or church. The villages we visited were some of the poorest in Kenya. I got a lot of patient care experience, I did lots of patient interviews, physical exams, and with the Kenya nurses made decisions about treatment and medication. I would definitely recommend it to other students.

Timeframe: Summer 2006

Contact information: Jessica Weiss, '09 (weissj@upstate.edu)

Houghton College (www.houghton.edu)

Iringia, Tanzania

The professor that I went to Tanzania with is named Jon Arenson. His e-mail address is Jon.Arensen@houghton.edu. The program is run by and is based in Iringa Tanzania right in the middle of the country. If anyone is interested in going he would be a great resource to use if looking for any information about places to stay or clinics and hospitals to look at. I would suggest that if anyone is interested they contact him and just let him know that they heard about him through me (Erin Horn) and the Houghton in Tanzania program. Because he is used to taking students on trips, he knows a lot of great local information, as well as how to get great deals on Safaris, etc. There is also a great organization that we worked with some that

helps deaf Tanzanians learn a trade, mostly arts and crafts that he might be able to hook someone up with. Be aware that he lives in the US in Houghton, NY for half of the year (the fall) and spends the spring in Tanzania.

Contact information: Erin Horn, '09 (horne@upstate.edu)

Bilal Muslim Mission and MEDEWELL, Tanzania, Africa

These organizations jointly co-ordinate mobile medical eye camps quarterly to target under serviced or rural locations in Tanzania. These camps provide surgical treatment for the elderly population effected by cataracts at no cost to the patient. They also have a series of charitable clinics in urban and rural centres offering a range of medical and diagnostic services. Furthermore, they dig wells in villages that don't have access to clean fresh water across the country.

Timeframe: Summer 2006

Contact: Aly Sheraly, '09 (sheralya@upstate.edu)

Howard Hughes Medical Institute and National Health Laboratory Services

Johannesburg, South Africa

I was part of Dr. Valerie Mizrahi's laboratory in Johannesburg, South Africa at the Center of Excellence in the National Health Laboratory Services. The focus of this lab is on the development and application of molecular genetic tools for identifying, validating, and characterizing new drug targets and vaccine candidates for tuberculosis (TB). My research project involved two methionine synthases in Mycobacterium smegmatis. I analyzed the dependence of different strains of the mycobacterium on each enzyme. I also investigated how the regulation of the methionine synthase genes changes with varying growth medium. My research on M. smegmatis will be subsequently applied to Mycobacterium tuberculosis, and aid the developed of new methods to control of the growth and virulence of TB.

Contacts: http://www.hhmi.org/cgi-bin/scientist_search/search.pl?it=INTERNATIONAL

This opportunity arose while I was an undergraduate at Rensselaer because Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) gives funding for undergraduate research projects and this was a new program that just began before my senior year. There are two main ways to get in contact with people to be involved in a research project (1) through HHMI or (2) contact the HHMI scholars directly as listed in the site above.

Additional Notes:

<http://www.hhmi.org/bulletin/may2006/chronicle/undergrad.html>

<http://polyblogs.rpi.edu/sadegr/>

These sites give information about other people's experiences through HHMI as well as other aspects of living in a different country and doing research. Also, keep in mind, that you can get involved in volunteer programs in the country that you're working in apart from the research project as well as extend the trip in order to travel and see more of the country and culture.

Timeframe: From 1st of June until 1st of August during the summer of 2005.

Contact information: Rokhsanna Sadeghi, '10 (sadeghir@upstate.edu)

William J. Clinton Foundation HIV/AIDS Initiative

www.clintonfoundation.org

Kingdom of Lesotho

The Clinton Foundation HIV/AIDS Initiative (CHAI) strives to make treatment for HIV/AIDS more affordable and to implement large-scale integrated care, treatment, and prevention programs. Since its inception, CHAI has dramatically reduced the cost of HIV/AIDS diagnostics and pharmaceuticals, and has helped bring AIDS care and treatment to over 415,000 people living with HIV/AIDS around the world. My work allowed me to do everything from conducting field surveys and interviews in rural clinics, to working with government and NGO partners to develop and implement new and innovative strategies towards resolving the multitude of issues impeding care.

Timeframe: July 2004- July 2005

Contact information: Reza Samad, '09 (samadr@upstate.edu)

Europe

International Federation Medical Students Associations (IFMSA)

<http://www.ifmsa.net/public/ecscopeselect.php>

Irakleon, Crete in Greece

I did a clinical exchange in the cardiology department at the University Hospital in Irakleon. I was able to see patients and watch procedures. I met some amazing people and made some great friends. There was time to travel and see some great sites as well. I have only good things to say

about the program.

Timeframe: July 2007

Contact: Robert Antoniou, '10 (antonior@upstate.edu)

University of Edinburgh-Department of Radiology Western General Hospital
(through IFMSA; www.ifmsa.org)
Edinburgh, Scotland

I can not express how amazing this elective was. From the first day I arrived for the elective I was welcomed with open arms. The attending (they call them consultants) was extremely kind and gave me a guided tour of the department. The staff and other physicians were extremely nice, including me in their social lives. I was invited to dinner parties, out to the pub, golfing and other activity the residents were doing. They truly make you feel like part of the family. They also allow you time off to explore Scotland if you want it. I took 3 days off to explore the highlands and many afternoons off to attend local events. The attending made a rotation for me which allowed me to view many different aspects of radiology. These included MRI, CT, plain films, barium swallows, ultrasound, and interventional radiology, each morning and afternoon being in different areas therefore I felt as though I learned so much and never got bored! You also constantly work with different attendings and residents which makes it fun. You also interact with other physicians in the hospital and it's nice to get all their different aspects on UK medicine. The physicians here are very involved with patient care and actually do a lot of their own radiography. They also give you autonomy allowing you to revise the rotation if you are particularly interested in one aspect of radiology. Also included is a week of neuroradiology which was interesting. The day consists of coming in at 8:30am with conference until 9am, then working in your given assignment (ex. CT, MRI, etc) until around noon. Then everyone meets up in the lounge and has lunch together (there's a cafe downstairs to get food). At 1pm there is usually a conference (ex. oncology, GI, etc) and after that you go to your afternoon assignment until about 4-5pm. There is a shuttle bus that travels around the city and will take you to work and home. There is also a great Edinburgh bus system that will take you anywhere you want to go. There is no test given in the clerkship.

As for housing I was lucky enough to have the head of the UK IFMSA lend me a room in his flat. It was so great because I was living with 3 other Scotland med students who showed me the ropes around town. They took me to ceiligh (Scottish) dances, dinner parties, grocery shopping (which is easy because there are food stores everywhere), tourist events and really became my good friends. All the students were very helpful and very interested in American culture. My flat was right in the middle of Edinburgh.

Edinburgh is a completely beautiful amazing city. It's also completely walkable. I never needed a car and got to all the main attractions. It also has beautiful surrounding mountains and parks so you could run or hike. It has so many activities and events to go to you will never run out of things to do. There is Edinburgh castle, holly rood house, golfing, ghost tours, shopping galore, pubs, restaurants, dance classes, rugby/football games(aka soccer) and so much more! Plus the people of Edinburgh are so nice and very friendly.

Timeframe: October 1st-28th, 2006

Contact information: Jennifer Kanapicki, '07 (kanapicki@aol.com)

International Federation Medical Students Associations (IFMSA)

<http://www.ifmsa.net/public>

<http://www.ifmsa-usa.org>

Albacete, Spain

My experience was a one-month medical research exchange facilitated by IFMSA. I went to a Syracuse-sized city in Spain called Albacete to do Alzheimer's research in the medical school's department of anatomy. However, they were flexible on site and allowed me to also perform procedures in immunohistochemistry, anesthesiology, neurosurgery, pharmacology, physiology, radiology, and histology. In all we submitted four articles to journals such as: Neurobiology of Disease, The British Journal of Pharmacology, and The European Journal of Neuroscience. The official language of the organization is English, but it was helped that I spoke Spanish. Part of the program included a social program, which included time at the beach, tasting native foods and beverages, fencing, and general social activities. The IFMSA-Spain representatives were extremely friendly and helpful, and the hosting departments were very friendly. It was a relatively inexpensive study abroad since a room was provided and two meals a day. There were other students there as well from all over the world, and I learned a lot about their medical systems, languages, and cultures. I have studied abroad before, but never before have I lived and learned so much. It was a phenomenal experience which I most highly recommend to all students.

Timeframe: Summer 2006

Contact information: Ichiro Ikuta, '09 (ikutai@upstate.edu)

Prague Selective

<http://sgusom.hyperlink.cz/>

The program consists of time spent with small groups of students and doctors in various departments of hospitals around Prague. The day may include patient rounds at the hospitals, observation of surgery, study of patient cases, lectures on various conditions and diseases, and discussions

of the Czech and European health care systems. There are small group sessions with course coordinators about twice a week. There is a short and simple final examination on the last day of the session. It can be taken for 2 credits through Upstate, with completion of a short paper on your experience.

Timeframe: July 9- 28 2006 (2007 dates are: July 8- 27) Mon- Fri 8:30 am- 12:30 pm, with small group sessions 2 afternoons a week
Contact information: Rebecca Dreher, '09 (dreherr@upstate.edu)

Global Volunteers – Ireland

<http://www.globalvolunteers.org/>

http://www.globalvolunteers.org/1main/ireland/volunteer_in_ireland.htm

I spent 2 weeks in Ireland this summer on a volunteer vacation through Global Volunteers. At that particular site, I helped out with maintenance projects (from hosting a party to mowing the lawn!) at the Glencree Centre for Reconciliation while learning about Irish history and the peace projects the centre is involved with. It was an incredible experience and a great break from medicine. Plus, GV is VERY student friendly - everything is all inclusive (except airfare) and there's a student discount.

Timeframe: 2 weeks summer 2006

Contact information: Melissa Cloonan, '09 (cloonanm@upstate.edu)

WHO – internship

I participated in a program through NYU that takes you to Geneva, Switzerland and you intern/learn about health policy. It is in connection with WHO. It is a combination of learning and group discussion and actual working on projects. My project was on the orphan crisis in sub-Saharan Africa. We had to get all the info on it, research possible policy suggestions and then present it. There were only two other Americans in the class and the other ten were from various countries. You learn so much from the other students! I think this was a really great experience and I loved it.

Contact information: Anju Hurria, '07 (hurriaa@upstate.edu)

Great Aupair

<http://www.greataupair.com>

I spent 2006 in Zurich, Switzerland working as an au pair (nanny). I lived with a family and took care of the children but I had time off and would travel quite a bit. During that time I visited Turkey, Rome, Prague, Vienna, Amsterdam, Madrid, and Nice. As far as getting a better feel for life abroad there are few better ways to do it than to live there.

Timeframe: 1 year, 2006

Contact Information: Katherine Dougher, '10 (dougherk@upstate.edu)

Middle East

Taglit Birthright Israel

<http://www.birthrightisrael.org/bin/en.jsp?enPage=HomePage>

The trip is a whirlwind 10 days where you travel throughout the country with a group of Jewish youths, your counselors and a tour guide. You get a chance to experience Israel from all aspects: cultural, spiritual, political, geographical through guided tours of museums and cities, intense outdoor adventures and interactive programming/activities with your group.

The website answers the "WHY ISRAEL?" question as follows:

It's a central part of Jewish history, culture and religion.

It's part of our family.

It's part of the general culture in which we live.

It's a beacon of Jewish pride and creativity.

These ten days are about your own very personal conversation with this most ancient land and most modern state.

Time frame/Dates: Trips are taking place on different dates depending on the specific organization you choose (Taglit is the umbrella organization and then there are specific daughter groups). The website has all the info they need. They must be Jewish and between 18-26 yrs without ever having been on an organized trip to Israel before to qualify, BECAUSE THE TRIP IS FREE. The trip is 10 days, but you can extend your trip if you wish.

Contact information: Erin Nozetz, '09 (nozetze@upstate.edu)

Shahid Beheshti Medical University
Tehran, Iran

World Health Organization collaborating center, Shahid Beheshti Medical University center for research, education and treatment in field of Tuberculosis, TB/HIV/AIDS, adult and children lung disease (pulmonary disease and thoracic surgery), heart disease (CCU, in and out patient), ICU. Youth in I.R. Iran represent the majority of the population (70% of the population is less than 30yrs old and 35% of the population is between 15-29yrs old). Iranian youth are exposed to problems such as an accelerating rate of AIDS transmission, drug usage, sexually transmitted infections (STIs). In addition, there is approximately 20% of the population (14 million) unemployed, which consists mostly of youth and women.

This project is study of the Iranian youth in regards to their health, wellness, and lifestyle. Information from approximated 100 Iranian youth from all providences in Iran was collected to assess their knowledge, understanding, and current state of physical and mental health. The information will be used to initiate further studies with Iranian youth as well as to aid the Ministry of Education to improve the current health education system in public schools to better address the needs of the youth.

Contacts:

Dr. Kamiar Alaei and Dr. Arash Alaei:
alaei2001@yahoo.com

Additional notes:

<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/10/7a8ceb97-4fb8-4b22-b87c-ad2d304720cb.html>

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/this_world/3791889.stm

The above links include information about the primary work of Dr. Kamiar and Arash Alaei, that is, to help improve the HIV/AIDS situation in Iran. They are very open to having students work with them on many projects as well as supporting a new proposal.

Timeframe: mid-June to mid-August (2006)

Contact information: Rokhsanna Sadeghi, '10 (sadeghir@upstate.edu)

Oceania

BUNAC: work, volunteer and teach abroad

www.bunac.org

New Zealand

The other abroad experience I had with an organization was living in New Zealand on a "Working Holiday Visa" that I got through the international organization called BUNAC. Under a "working holiday visa" Americans under the age of 30 (but I think it might get changed to 35) can live and work whatever jobs you can manage to get for up to a year. You can only get it once in your life. Because most people use it to travel around the country, you often get temporary jobs like seasonal fruit picking or waitressing or office temp. work. But you can really work any type of job that you can get hired for. And you don't have to get this visa through BUNAC only- I just did it that way because it was easier- they helped sort things out for me. But you can apply for it directly if you want.

Timeframe: '05-'06

Contact Information: Cassie Stack, '09 (stackc@upstate.edu)

Asia

Health Clinic at Thailand-Burma border

I worked in a free healthcare clinic on the border of Thailand and Burma. The clinic serves internationally displaced persons from Burma who flee to Thailand to escape the repression of the military regime. The clinic serves all demographics and illnesses. While there I saw infectious diseases like malaria and leprosy, as well as landmine injuries and afflictions of an impoverished population such as malnutrition and cholera. American medical students can do an away rotation at the clinic and I plan to do so my fourth year. I will return briefly this summer to visit the clinic and help in a two week training program for Burmese medics who return to Burma to provide care for their home communities.

Although I do not know the number of spaces available, I believe it would be possible and quite facile for students and faculty to spend time at the clinic. One major concern is that the clinic does not want much publicity because the Thai government does not approve of its existence. I invite contact from anyone interested in this issue.

Timeframe: Summer 2005

Contact information: Josh Auerbach, '08 (auerbacj@upstate.edu)

Canada World Youth funded by Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

London, Ontario and then New Delhi, India

In a team of 20 youths (half Canadian, half Indian), we worked in the field of HIV, learning mostly about the social and economic factors that perpetuate the spread of HIV and have caused government and public to respond so slowly. We learned quite a bit about the various demographics that are affected, and the unique and shared problems of each group. Gained a whole lot of team work experience, facilitating skills, gradually learned about what it really means to be open-minded and how to think critically beyond academics. All of this was done within two different cultural settings and so we were given a more balanced perspective of everything we learned rather than believing that the Canadian point of view was the only one.

*Only Canadian youths age 18-35.

Timeframe: September 2005 – March 2006

Contact information: Tom Man, '07 (mant@upstate.edu)

USA-Mexico Border

Holy Family Birthing Center

(<http://www.holyfamilybirthcenter.com/index.htm>)

Weslaco, Texas

I did some volunteer translating here (<http://www.holyfamilybirthcenter.com/index.htm>) about 15 years ago. They largely train and work with nurses and midwives, but may have contacts for other organizations. My main experience was with a place that was a refugee shelter. I then volunteered at this place on my days off. They are an amazing organization and are a real community. I was a tag-along on many trips to Mexico and out in the field doing "home" visits to many very poor and struggling families, with new moms and new babies. In some ways holy family birthing center reminds me of Paul Farmer and his work, but less well advertised.

Contact information: Sarah Averill, '10 (sarah.averill@gmail.com)

Global Agencies with Local Contacts:

Doctors for Global Health

www.dghonline.org

Local contact: Shirley Novak, Treasurer, shirleynovak@yahoo.com

Palliative Care International

Local Contact: Peter Sarver, psarver234@yahoo.com

For a copy of this document, to add or update information contact: Elizabeth Dawson (dawsone@upstate.edu)