

Fall 2017

A Veterinary Voyage with Vida Volunteer - Kara Anderson

Over winter break I had the opportunity to travel to Costa Rica and Nicaragua with Vida Volunteer to provide veterinary care to underserved communities. It was an eye-opening experience that I will forever cherish and appreciate.



Figure 1: My first patient, ready to be spayed

On the second day of the trip we split into our respective groups (veterinary, medical, and dental teams) for orientation. There were eight girls on the vet team. We discussed what was expected of us in the clinic: setting up the intake, surgery, and recovery areas, performing the patients' physical exams, prepping them for surgery, assisting with the surgery or monitoring them while under anesthesia, and preparing them for discharge back to their owner. It was overwhelming, but I felt ready to take on the challenge.

After orientation concluded, we headed to Liberia, which was a short drive from where we would be setting up our clinic. Liberia is a beautiful city full of life and culture, and I was excited to explore this novel place. The first clinic day was in the La Cruz community, and we got right to work at 8am. After setting up the clinic and dividing into pairs, we began treating patients. We were able to put to practice all that we had learned during orientation, and we quickly adapted to the flow of the clinic and the required pace to treat all the patients we had that day.

During the two clinic days, I treated five patients, four of which needed to either be spayed or neutered. By the second day, I was confident in what I needed to do, and I was able to accomplish tasks quickly and efficiently. I was so excited to be making a difference and I was eager to help more patients in Nicaragua. After saying farewell to the wonderful veterinarian and intake technician that we worked with in Costa Rica, we had a recreational day at the *Playa del Coco*, or “Coconut Beach.”



Figure 2: The view from the top of the Masaya Volcano

We then traveled across the border into Nicaragua and met our homestay families in Masaya. We traveled to the top of the Masaya Volcano, and enjoyed what the charming city had to offer. My homestay mom owned a restaurant near the town's park, which we enjoyed relaxing in after a long clinic day. The Nicaraguan clinic days proved to be similar to those in Costa Rica. We had two veterinarians in Nicaragua who gave us great advice and helped us through stressful or challenging situations. Over three days, I was able to treat twelve patients. For our last clinic day we were in Granada and we treated large animals. We dewormed cattle, pigs, horses, and chickens. It was a great last day.

My trip was unforgettable, and I am so grateful to the Honors Program at UD for allowing me to have this special experience. I am very proud that I was able to help pets in impoverished communities receive treatments while also being immersed in a foreign culture, and I look forward to my future career where I can do this each day!

A Glimpse into *Aguacate* - Georgia Gagianas

After a multitude of unforeseen flight changes and various pieces of luggage lost, we finally approached the rural village of *Aguacate*, Guatemala. For years I had dreamed of visiting this far away town as my elementary school classmates and I made cards and blankets that were delivered annually by a team of equipped teachers. It was fitting that as my desire to enter the medical field became stronger, a medical clinic was slowly built in this same town. The trip finally became a reality for me thanks to the generosity of Honors Program donors and soon enough I arrived in *Aguacate* with a team of jet-lagged medical professionals.



It was rainy and cold as we carried bag after bag into the clinic and began to see the faces of people who would eventually make an indescribable impact on our lives. We were greeted by a room full of villagers who waited with quiet anticipation for our arrival all day. One of the village elders expressed his deepest thanks to us for being there and a line formed for each person to welcome us with a warm smile. I could not help but notice how different we seemed from these people who were dressed in vibrant colors with intricate headscarves and spoke with quiet voices.

In the midst of the small houses and dirt roads that made up *Aguacate's* landscape, we began five days of treatment. Prior to the trip we prepared ourselves as best we could by learning about these Mayan descendants and how they have managed to preserve their culture despite years of persecution and struggle. It was more difficult than I imagined to overcome the language barrier. The villagers spoke a native language called *Chuq* that had to be translated to Spanish and then English for us to communicate with them. We slowly began to learn to rely on other forms of communication and realized that a smile or a soft nod of understanding would convey much more than any translation app.



I spent the next few days in the clinic shadowing a urologist, family practice physician, pediatrician, and physician assistant. Throughout the trip I had the opportunity to interact with patients by administering blood tests, taking blood pressure, and helping to locate the appropriate medications. One of the most meaningful part of the trip for me was when I had the chance to teach the women of the village how to use the feminine hygiene kits we brought that were provided by Days for Girls. These kits will allow the girls to reuse pads so they can continue to go to school or work while on their period which is extremely important. Another memory I will never forget was when we told a woman she was pregnant and had the chance to let her listen to her baby's heartbeat using an ultrasound. The villagers use midwives to deliver their babies so this would be the only time in her life she had this kind of opportunity since they do not have access to this kind of technology.

The villager's willingness to share their stories with us was inspirational. They were strong in their beliefs and persistent in their love for culture and family. I learned so much throughout this journey and discovered a true love for the medical profession. I am beyond excited to continue my journey to one day become a physician and hopefully help people just like the ones we met in *Aguacate*.

Experiencing Italian Healthcare - Hayley Goodwin



This winter I had the extraordinary experience of participating in a medical fellowship for nearly two weeks in Genoa, Italy. My fellowship was at the internationally acclaimed pediatric hospital *Istituto Giannina Gaslini*, and was facilitated by the Atlantis Project: an organization that prides itself on innovating healthcare education by providing college students the opportunity to shadow doctors worldwide. I was excited by the prospect of gaining medical knowledge while working with children and practicing my language skills.

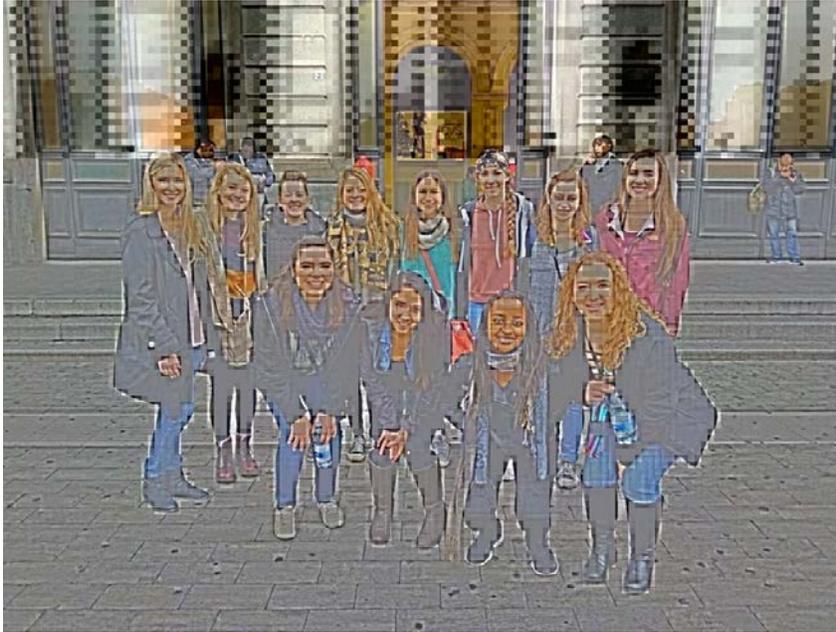
My fellowship began in *Gaslini's* neurosurgery

department. Atlantis Fellows are allowed to shadow in two different departments during their time at the hospital, so I chose neurosurgery first since I hope to pursue the field in medical school. While shadowing the neurosurgeons, I made patient rounds in the morning where I saw various neurological disorders, ranging from twisted vertebrae to skull malformations. After making rounds, the surgeons explained the patients' MRI scans to me before I accompanied



them to the operating room. There, I watched various surgeries, including a head fixation and skull compression. I was awed by my experiences in the OR. I had never seen a surgery in-person prior to this, and looking at a skull and spinal cord for the first time is something I will never forget.

When I was told my second rotation would be in the oncology department, I was very excited. I am passionate about the need for more cancer research, and my time among the oncologists further heightened my interest in assisting cancer patients. I completed patient rounds with the oncologists, observed department meetings, and listened to discussions of various cancer treatment options. Because I shadowed in the long-term care unit of the department, many of the patients we saw were terminal. I expected the atmosphere to be very solemn in light of such circumstances, but the patients always expressed joy whenever the doctors entered the room. I was touched by the doctors' empathy and their ability to brighten each patient's day. I can only



hope that one day, when I am a doctor, I can make such a positive impact in the lives of those I treat. Outside of the hospital, the Fellows bonded over group dinners, a walking tour of the city, and a tour of Italy's oldest chocolate factory. We were also given the weekend as free time, and I was able to further explore Italian culture by venturing to the nearby cities of Pisa and Verona.

Without the generosity of the Honors Program donors, I would not have been able to

join the Atlantis Project. I would have missed out on the friendships and the medical and cultural knowledge I gained as a part of the fellowship. My time in Italy cemented my passion for medicine and my desire to positively impact the lives of those I encounter. I will be forever grateful for this opportunity, and I am excited to see its future benefits as I apply for medical school and continue to pursue a career in medicine.

To Delve into a Difficult History: My Holocaust Historical Research in Poland and Germany - Rachel Milberg



Figure 3: My grandmother and I at the only surviving Synagogue after the Warsaw Uprising

As the granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor, I have always felt a certain responsibility to the idea of remembering. The widely known idea of memorializing the Holocaust is to “never forget.” We are to never forget the victims, or the hardships, or the terrible crimes that occurred in these countries that will forever have a large, dark splotch on their history. But for me, remembering is more than just honoring my grandfather’s strength and acknowledging the horrors that he endured. Remembering is action.

This winter, I traveled to Poland and Germany for 16 days to conduct historical research on the Holocaust in order to better my abilities in writing and speaking about the tragic events. Knowing my grandfather’s story, part of my trip included retracing the steps of his specific past. This included visiting where he was born in Warsaw, Poland, and where he was imprisoned in Buchenwald concentration

camp in Weimar, Germany. In the 16 days I traveled, accompanied by my grandmother, I visited six vastly different cities with extremely rich histories, heard incredibly moving and personal stories, and spoke to some of the most interesting and smart people I have ever met.

I first visited Warsaw, a city that was 80% destroyed as a result of the Warsaw Uprising and rebuilt within the years following. I took a Jewish Heritage tour of the city, a city tour for contextual knowledge, and visited POLIN, the beautifully created Museum of the History of Polish Jews. While in Warsaw, I also met with a Polish friend of a University professor who spoke with me about the culture of Warsaw, and shared with me her experience growing up in Poland.

I traveled to Lublin to visit *Majdanek*, the first concentration camp to be liberated in July of 1944. We visited Krakow and Auschwitz II Birkenau, the site of the largest mass murder of mankind. One can watch movies, read books, and see photos of the Holocaust, but it isn’t until you step onto the land in which these atrocities occurred that you feel this heavy sense of complete and total speechlessness. In their vast silence, there is an echo. After this tolling day (Auschwitz is so large it takes about 7.5 hours to complete the entire tour) we went to a traditional Jewish dinner at a restaurant called *Klezmer Hois* (a restaurant that Steven Spielberg visited whilst filming *Schindler’s list!*). And finally, we took a Jewish Heritage tour of Krakow in which we visited *Schindler’s Factory*, an uplifting story in the face of such sadness.

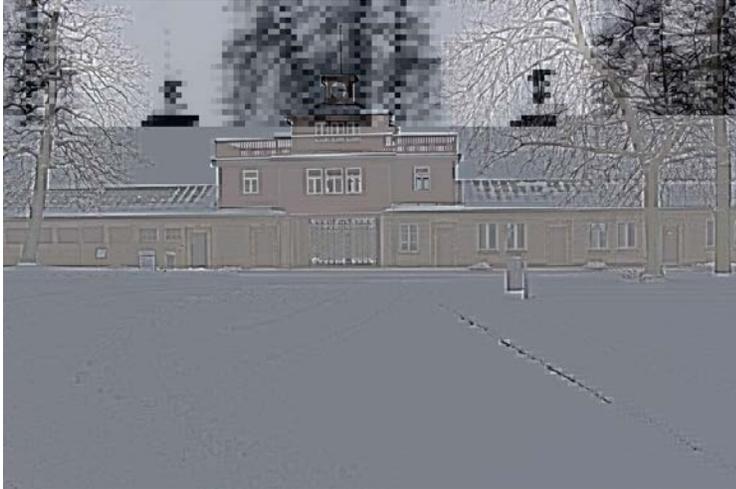


Figure 4: The Buchenwald Gate, Weimar, Germany

The most impactful part of my trip was when I traveled to Weimar and met with a young man named Laird, who works in Buchenwald. I had been emailing Laird back and forth for a month before the trip, and I was very eager to meet him in person and speak about the important and relevant history of Buchenwald. Being my grandfather's concentration camp, this was the most important part of my trip, the place in which I hoped would bring me to a better understanding of his story. There, Laird gave us a private tour of the camp. We visited the room where

thousands of objects are restored, and then we made our way to the museum. It was a Monday, a day in which normally the Buchenwald museum is closed, but Laird, so kindly, was able to open it for us and allow only us to wander around the vast museum for as long as we wished. We then went to the archives. There, many nice women helped me to translate my grandfather's name into the original Polish spelling, and we were, astoundingly, able to find his documents. This included his prisoner card, the transport list with his name on it, and countless other documents that explained unique information that he had never seen before. All the documents were marked at the top: Pole, Jude (Polish Jew). Bringing those documents home for him was truly one of the most incredible things I have ever been able to do, and I am forever grateful to the generosity of the Honors Program for allowing me to do that.



Figure 5: Memorial at Buchenwald, always heated to human temperature

This trip provided me with a knowledge that I am endlessly grateful to have been able to obtain. Traveling to so many places by train allowed me to meet many people of whom told me their stories in relation to the Holocaust just because they had stories to share. To learn about the way Holocaust education is conducted in Poland and Germany, to speak with those who work in memorials and camps, to have dinner with people who care to have rich conversation about a topic so sensitive and complicated was the educational experience of a

lifetime. While a dark and saddening trip, it was so unbelievably interesting, exciting and special to be able to visit new countries with complex and vast histories. It showed me how much of this

history is truly illustrated by the victims. Through their beautiful works of art, poems, quotes and testimonies, they write a history that reflects them, and their experiences. Again, I'd like to thank the Honors Program for providing me with this enriching experience. From this research and from the testimonies of those that I met with, I believe that I have a much better ability to write and speak about the Holocaust. From this experience, I am working to produce a larger piece of writing about both my grandfather, and the experience of being in a family affected by a tragedy so deep, so unique, and so ingrained in both culture and history.