



Global Health Education Student Experiences

Christian Figueredo

Quetzaltenango, Guatemala with Pop Wuj

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Drexel medical student Christian Figueredo in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala with Pop Wuj.

Beginning as a small clinic for the rural, indigenous people of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, Pop Wuj has grown into a multi-faceted outreach organization that has served thousands of members in the local community. In my short time there, I grew to love their compassion and approach to the at-risk patient population they serve. Their on-staff physicians provide affordable and effective care, as they travel to many of the surrounding towns and villages. In addition to immediate medical needs, Pop Wuj offers health education classes, nutrition and growth tracking for children, safe stove installation and educational scholarships for local families.

For five weeks, I was given the incredible opportunity to participate in the medical program at Pop Wuj, while also having daily, individualized classes on Spanish grammar and conversation. In the clinic, students helped triage patients by taking medical histories and vital signs. This afforded me excellent medical experience in a primary care setting, as well as an opportunity to practice the medical Spanish that I had been learning throughout my time at Pop Wuj.



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Specifically, this experience enhanced my understanding of strategic global health, as I observed the careful and deliberate approach that Pop Wuj uses in every endeavor. For example, my first week at the school included daily lectures covering the unique cultures that occupy the western region of Guatemala. We covered topics ranging from Mayan history and culture to the recent Guatemalan civil war and understood how each affects healthcare. To provide care that does not understand the social influences of the patient is ineffective and does a disservice to the individual. My time at Pop Wuj was an unforgettable and eye-opening experience that I would recommend to anyone.



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