International Service Learning
Medical Mission Trip
Travel • Serve • Learn

Puerto Peñasco, Mexico
May 11th – May 17th
THANK YOU!

First, I would like to start by saying thank you, Dr. Ransom! Both your letter of recommendation for the Sullivan Fellowship application and your support were greatly appreciated. This trip would not have been possible without the financial support of The Sullivan grant, and it enabled me to engage in a life changing experience. Not only did I learn more about the Mexican culture and the severe levels of poverty in Puerto Peñasco, but I also gained an abundance of medical knowledge that would not have been possible without this trip.

On May 11th, we departed from the Detroit airport and landed in Phoenix, Arizona. From there, we took a bus ride to the Villa Granada hotel. This hotel provides housing for the weekend mission trips that come down to Sonora, Mexico to rebuild churches in the local area. We spent the beginning of the week working side by side with the doctors in the local hospitals and health clinics. In the hospital, my group was assigned to the ER. We had the opportunity to see a variety of different cases ranging from infections, pregnancies, hernias, and circulatory problems. Our group worked together with the help of the doctor to diagnose the patients and provide the proper prescriptions. In the health clinic, we checked the incoming patients vitals, which included blood pressure, pulse, respiratory frequency, and body temperature, and then we also recorded the patient’s height, weight, BMI, and glucose levels.

In addition to the hospital and health clinic, we also went on house visits. This part of the trip was definitely the most eye opening. The neighborhoods expressed the extreme levels of poverty that the patients and their families were enduring. Many houses lacked running water, electricity, and sewer systems, and the houses were no bigger than the size of a small living room. Some were made out of cardboard, while others had dirt floors. Seeing the living conditions of these families really makes one so appreciative of the items we perceive as necessities because they lacked many of these items. Given that these areas were Spanish-speaking communities, we broke down into groups with a bilingual assistant. My group’s translator was Sammy. He helped us ask questions about the living conditions of the family, patient history, and family history, and also invite the patients to the free clinic on Friday and Saturday that ISL holds. While doing the house visits we would also check the patients’ vitals and check on any medical complaints.
Most of the families that we saw came to the clinic the following days and had the ability to seek further medical attention from the doctor. At the clinic we also provided medical donations, vitamins, bandages, toothpaste, toothbrushes, and toys for the children. The families were so appreciative of the donations, and the kids loved their new toys. The beanie babies that would not compare to the electronics and other gadgets that American kids have these days made the children so happy. The clinic also gave us some time to spend playing soccer, monkey in the middle, and just having fun with the children while they broke open the piñata.

In addition to these experiences, we also had the opportunity to assist with hippotherapy at a horse farm in a surrounding village. The owners used their horses as a type of physical therapy and recreational therapy for the children. After the clinics, we also went to a Sonoran Desert Medicinal Plant Seminar that was quite interesting. We learned about the natural remedies that families use as alternatives to prescribed medications and the holistic methods they used to cure sicknesses. Overall, it was an amazing experience, and I wish we could have stayed longer! Thank you once again for helping me make this trip possible.