Nursing Students on a Mission

Each year since 2006, the UT Health Science Center San Antonio School of Nursing has offered students a unique opportunity to participate in an international health care mission trip, the San Antonio Guatemalan Endeavor trip. Last summer, Accelerated BSN students Helen Bowie, Christine Ledder, Leslie Mueller, Megan O’Leary, and Katrina Theis were chosen to participate in the 2012 trip.

The San Antonio Guatemalan Endeavor trip is a 12 day health care mission trip where nursing faculty and students unite with an interprofessional healthcare team to provide medical and surgical care to the indigenous Guatemalan Mayan Indians.

“Attaining professional and personal growth is consistently verbalized by the nursing students and students state the medical trip as a life-changing experience,” said Janis Rice, UTHSCSA course coordinator for the program.

This opportunity enables the student to experience working with a culture whose language and customs are foreign to their native country while serving to meet The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice competencies. The mission also requires each student to adapt to an austere environment that requires flexibility, creativity, and endurance of long clinical days.

Students learn to cultivate effective professional relationships to improve nursing skills, develop time management skills in a fast paced medical and surgical setting; and to reflect on the health care challenges faced by a vulnerable and underprivileged population.

“Participating in the San Antonio Guatemalan Endeavor health mission trip was an amazing, life-changing experience. It was uplifting to know that our accomplishments helped families and gave them the care they deserve. This experience has helped me grow as a person,” Helen Bowie, UTHSCSA nursing student said.

Students provide direct patient care in areas such as triage, a preoperative/intraoperative setting, a post-anesthesia unit, the post-operative arena, and also became involved in the community helping to install stoves in the homes of the Guatemalan families.

Nursing student Megan O’Leary speaks of her experience, “It is incredibly humbling and reminded me of why I wanted to become a nurse in the first place.”

If you would be interested in participating in the San Antonio Guatemalan Endeavor, please contact Janis Rice at ricej@uthscsa.edu. The dates for the summer 2013 trip are July 13 – 24th.