

Painful Goodbyes

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As I begin settling in to college, I can't seem to stop thinking about Guatemala and my entire experience there.

Overall, I delivered three babies, improved my Spanish, and sat in for various family planning appointments this summer. I did not know it was possible to surpass all of my learning goals for the summer with this incredible opportunity. What enthralled me the most during this internship was understanding the differences between the U.S. and Guatemalan health care systems. I now want a more direct focus in the field of global health and international development. In the future I hope to keep traveling and working abroad to receive a more global experience.

I would absolutely recommend this program to public health students interested in the field of maternal child health. I would advise them to come with an expectation to learn and to take advantage of every day there.

After working in Guatemala, a few of my philosophies have changed dramatically. I used to believe that hospitals are always safe and that c-sections are great options for women. After having conversations with local Guatemalan women in my clinic and working in a natural birth center, I realized how important female empowerment is especially to pregnant women. All women deserve the right to a natural birth and a right to choose her birthing method. I hope to gather more research in this area of study and possibly have more to write about soon.

Everything I learned this summer wouldn't have been possible had I not worked abroad. I can't wait to apply everything I learned in my university and my experiences to come.