

# THE BEAT

for CUA School of Nursing Students

## NURSING STUDENTS GO GLOBAL!

26 CUA nursing students experience impact of community health first-hand through global education clinicals in Guatemala, Kenya, and Uganda.

By Rachel Thoms

What's it like to come face-to-face with an elephant while you are in class? Or holding a patient's hand while their toenail was removed from a gangrene infected toe while earning clinical hours?

In summer 2018, the Concordia University Ann Arbor School of Nursing launched three global clinical sites for students to complete their community health clinical hours. Twenty-six nursing students spent time in Guatemala, Uganda, and Kenya volunteering their time and talents in rural slums, clinics, community hospitals, and family households.



*"Caring for people from various cultures from around the globe provides our students with a unique opportunity to learn and serve, both of which align with Concordia's mission,"* said Campus Dean and Associate Professor Cindy Fenske. *"The students were able to use their skills to provide care, hope, healing, and knowledge to the people they served."*

The summer trips took place on the heels of a record-breaking study abroad year for Concordia University. The university sent 315 students—representing online, centers, and the Mequon and Ann Arbor campuses—participating in dozens of distinct global learning opportunities in more than 30 different countries in the 2017-18 academic year.

Numbers from this summer and fall continue to climb thanks to the success of the global education courses being offered at Concordia. Global Ed courses, like these international nursing opportunities, are faculty-led study abroad opportunities that can be completed for course credit and typically last one to three weeks.

While the addition of three new student trips in just one year was already an uncommon accomplishment for CUA's school of nursing, the program has sights set on increasing global opportunities for students in 2019.



*"We are thankful that the Lord has opened up so many opportunities for partnering with mission-based organizations so that we can give this opportunity to all of our nursing students,"* said Fenske. *"Our hope is to send students to these sites summer after summer, allowing us to make a considerable impact in the lives of those we are serving."*

Upon their return, nursing students have been eager to share how they are forever-changed because of their global summer experiences.





## GUATEMALA

**July 13-26, 2018**

Lake Amatitlán, Guatemala City

Concordia nursing partnered with MOST ministries on their trip to Guatemala. Led by Professor Dr. Mihaela Zegrean, one junior and six seniors spent their time focusing on water sanitation and nursing care provided in a public health clinic interacting with the people of Lake Amatitlán area. The students provided nursing care to patients with respiratory infections, GI problems, skin diseases like scabies, and even gangrene. The nursing students also ran a mobile clinic in a distant village to administer vaccines to children and assist with medical consultations to individuals unable to make it to the clinic.

Desi Reyes ('18) shares that it was amazing to see how much the health care workers of the area could do with so little. "Despite the lack of resources, the patients' and clinical staff's attitudes did not exhibit a drop of bitterness," said Reyes. "The clinicians worked efficiently and collaboratively and moreover, they were happy to provide us with guidance when we needed it."



A day that Reyes will never forget is when the group took a trip to a woman's home who was receiving the gift of a new vented stove for her home, donated by a volunteers from a Lutheran church in California.

"Sheets of metal put together with a metal roof held down by cinder blocks is not my idea of a 'home,' but for the last 18 years, this was this woman's home," said Reyes. "She prepped her food on a rock slab covered in ash, dirt, and bugs and would burn wood inside of her house to prepare the food with no sort of ventilation system for the smoke of the open flame."

Reyes said she and her Concordia classmates were speechless after what they had witnessed, but felt blessed by the opportunity to use their God-given talents to sincerely impact the lives of the people they were meeting.

"Little did we know, our lives, too, will be forever impacted because of the people we met and what we were experiencing," said Reyes. "It felt like we learned more in this one clinical experience in Guatemala than all of our clinical experiences combined!"

Reyes says that even though they sometimes felt like small gestures, she knows that some patients would not have received care had she and others from CUAA not been there. Reyes hopes other nursing students from Concordia get the opportunity to go to Guatemala and use their nursing skills to help those living in the village of Lake Amatitlán.







## INSTRUCTOR PERSPECTIVE—Guatemala

*Mihaela Zegrean*

Leading a global education clinical course in Guatemala this summer was by far one of the most amazing experiences in my nursing career. Together with 7 nursing students and the leader from our partner organization, MOST, we spent approximately two weeks in a residence on Lake Amatitlan. Each morning we enjoyed the majestic backyard view of the lake, volcanoes and tropical vegetation. In the midst of so much natural beauty, there was substantial poverty that contributed to many of the illnesses commonly encountered in Guatemala. But, I think what struck me the most was the attitude of locals. Despite having perhaps a small fraction of the commodities and lifestyles that we enjoy in North America, they did not seem individualistic, easily angered or impatient. During one of the morning devotions, I read several verses from 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (NIV).



***“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.”***

The next day, while working in a village clinic, a patient comes who is wearing a shirt with those exact verses. The patient did not speak English and it was highly unlikely that she knew what those verses meant, but I think it was a great way for God to remind us of what matters most! Our host, Dr. Elry Orozco, a Lutheran pastor and physician (and previous professor of medicine), showed us those Bible verses in action on multiple occasions while working in a village clinic. It is rare to find a physician with Dr. Elry’s level of humbleness and desire to teach others through servant leadership. Through multiple experiences such as climbing the Pacaya volcano, walking through the streets and markets of Antigua, visiting people in the community, soccer games, card games, and movie night, we also had the opportunity to know each other more. I have learned so much not just from our host, Dr. Elry, but also from our Concordia students: Ann, Bezawit, Alexandria, Desiree, Amanda, Stephanie, and Warda. They have taught me how to laugh, and dance and make the best of life in every moment.



### Who is MOST Ministries?

Mission Opportunities Short Term (MOST Ministries) is a Christian non-profit organization that connects, trains, and sends short-term mission teams throughout the world, in response to requests from missionaries and church bodies. MOST Ministries provides for the physical and spiritual needs of more than 10,000 people each year by connecting Goers, Senders and Receivers. It is a commitment to the Great Commission that has compelled MOST Ministries to go far and near for the sake of the Gospel since 1989.



## KENYA

**July 21-August 4, 2018**

Athi River, Voi

CUAA partnered with Hope Without Borders for the global clinical in Kenya which focuses on nursing care provided at clinics, hospital settings, and home visits as well as water and sanitation.

Along with school of nursing professor Peggy McLaughlin, seven CUAA students (6 juniors, 1 senior) travelled to very rural areas of Kenya to do healthcare visits in areas where such care is extremely limited. The students also assisted with health clinics and providing hygiene kits of soap, deodorant, and underwear for students in the Mukuru slums.

One student, Turome Chandler ('18) even had the opportunity to help deliver a baby girl. Chandler was granted the high honor of helping to name her.

"I chose to name her after my daughter, Wynnsor, with the middle name Ann for Ann Arbor," said Chandler. "I can't wait to tell my daughter one day that there is a young lady in Africa that shares her name."

Chandler originally chose to travel to Kenya because he had heard great things about the kindness of the people and the tastiness of the coffee. What he didn't know is how much he would learn about himself and his future vocation as a nurse because of his experience.

"It is possible to accomplish more with less," said Chandler. "In America, we heavily rely on our possessions and fancy technology to accomplish our goals, but in Kenya, they can only use what they have, like soil, rocks, and second-hand supplies. Their creativity runs deep, and it's how they survive. They don't have the things we have."



Chandler says there is so much more learning that takes place when you are faced with the realities of a total immersion experience. The students washed their clothes by hand, heard lions roar as they slept in hut-like structures, and experienced the reality of poverty first-hand from the Kenyans that they helped and befriended.

Ashlyn LeBlanc ('19) shared that she will never forget the day the group traveled to the Mukuru slums to pass out hygiene kits to the children. Their homes, measuring 10 feet by 10 feet, were made from metal shipping containers. They

would run their businesses selling fruits, vegetables, and homemade goods out of the front of their homes and use the back of the homes as their living quarters.

"The people we met, though they hardly had anything and were surrounded by trash and raw sewage, were some of the happiest people I have ever met," said LeBlanc. "Their smiles lit up the room, and their willingness to never give up was contagious."

LeBlanc, Chandler, and their classmates worked with patients at the St. Joseph Shelter of Hope Hospital in Voi, Kenya and Beacon of Hope in Nairobi, Kenya. Along with assisting with two c-sections, the nursing students provided fluoride treatments to 110 children, fit people for eyeglasses, and helped many who are affected by HIV.

"The people of Kenya really do make the best of every situation," said LeBlanc. "I am going to be a better nurse because of this trip because I understand how we are blessed by our resources and healthcare."







## INSTRUCTOR PERSPECTIVE—Kenya

Peggy McClaughlin

Concordia Nursing students have compassion and integrity, and they are intrepid! Our team of 7 CUAA Nursing students and 2 clinical instructors travelled to Kenya where we took part in health care delivery in urban and rural environments.

Our team hit the ground running with a stay in the capital, Nairobi. Every day began with a review of the day's plan. Daily devotions helped to prepare the team for challenging situations; throughout the trip, I was especially mindful of the verse, *"And lo, I am with you always."* (Matthew 28:19). Whether visiting community members in Nairobi's slums, jostling in the back of a vehicle to a remote village, or comforting a patient's loved ones as they waited to see the hospital nurse, it was comforting to know of God's ever-present love. Morning events began with the team piling into a minivan to work at various sites in the city or in "the bush". On the first day, the team delivered some 300 hygiene packs to help keep girls and boys in school, then visited families in need in central Nairobi. For



the rest of the week, students worked among various communities. One morning was spent at a grammar school to complete fluoride treatments for more than 100 students. The afternoon brought a meeting with community health workers, who shared stories about income generating activities toward sustainable gardens and local advocacy initiatives. We learned about initiatives to empower women's groups, and the role of youth as change agents to prevent infection and improve nutrition. A four-hour train ride took the team to Voi, the site of a small hospital and a bustling market. A pan-African nursing staff introduced us to local health care challenges and promising practices as they worked side-by-side with Concordia Nursing students. A valuable lesson was how to provide care for body and spirit despite scarce hospital resources such as gloves and stethoscopes, and we were able to compare how practices such as medication administration are managed in Kenyan and American hospitals. The Kenya team also provided vision screening and eyeglasses,

visited with women's groups, and assessed children's health status at an orphanage. The Kenya experience made it possible for nursing students to get a first-hand glimpse of issues that challenge health in East Africa. Mostly, though, the Kenya experience presented daily occasions to grow in faith, and to be grateful. Every day, each one of our student served with the integrity, compassion and excellent attitude that embody a Concordia nurse.

### Who is Hope Without Borders?

Hope Without Borders is a non-profit volunteer humanitarian non-governmental organization based in the Midwest USA with a focus on global, regional and local community relief and development impact and outreach. HWB is committed to bringing hope to communities in need by providing education, medical care and clean water.







## UGANDA

**July 22-August 5, 2018**

Jinja

Twelve CUAA nursing students (4 juniors, 8 seniors) partnered with Women of the Pearl to serve and study in Jinja, Uganda. This trip was led by school of nursing advisor Angie Raasch.

Senior Caitlyn Freshour ('18) chose this trip because of its emphasis on women's health. Freshour, a volunteer at the inner-city Detroit pre and post-natal The Luke Project 52 Clinic, learned that sometimes the problems you face as a nurse are not in your own control to fix.

"In Uganda, I had to just offer what I could, and some days that was simply a smile, a laugh or just my time," said Freshour. "As a nurse, even if I can't cure a patient's illness, I can still be a positive impact, even if just for a day."

Freshour was grateful that this trip offered opportunity to continue to develop cultural sensitivity and finding ways to connect with people despite the many differences and foreign environment.



A highlight for Freshour was visiting Christ Community Lutheran School. "The kids were so excited just to have visitors. Our mission for the day was to play with them and just have fun, and oh my goodness, we had so much fun," said Freshour. "I pray I never forget their sweet smiles."

Concordia senior Shalena Blocker ('18) remembers the groups' time at Nakivale refugee settlement as a day that she will never forget. Because the children didn't speak English, Blocker began making animal noises to make the children laugh.

"I wanted to find a way to connect with them that crossed over the language barrier," said Blocker. "Before I knew it, I had a crowd of kids sitting in front of me and laughing at me!"

Blocker, who like Freshour, chose this trip because of its emphasis on women and children's health, shared the sense of helplessness she felt when she observed how much help was needed but was only able to assist in a limited capacity as a nursing student.

Blocker stated that she knew that God led her to this trip for a reason, and that helped to ease her sense of helplessness. Blocker also experienced the Lord's presence in a physical sense when the group took a trip to visit the Nile River.

"I became teary-eyed when I put my hand into the water of the Nile, because I could feel God's presence," said Blocker, "I was interacting with Biblical history where tons of people have been and witnessed miraculous things happen, and there I was, at the source of it all."







## INSTRUCTOR PERSPECTIVE—Uganda

Angie Raasch

On July 22<sup>th</sup> 2018, 12 CUA Nursing students partnered with Women of the Pearl and embarked on a journey to Uganda, Africa for pediatric and community health clinicals. A journey that wasn't about them – they had to put themselves aside, trust God, and step into uncommon situations, use uncommon bathroom facilities, provide care in an uncommon way, squeeze into uncommon transportation, eat uncommon food, and step into an uncommon educational experience. An uncommon experience that changed lives forever.

***“Have I not commanded you, be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”*** Joshua 1:9

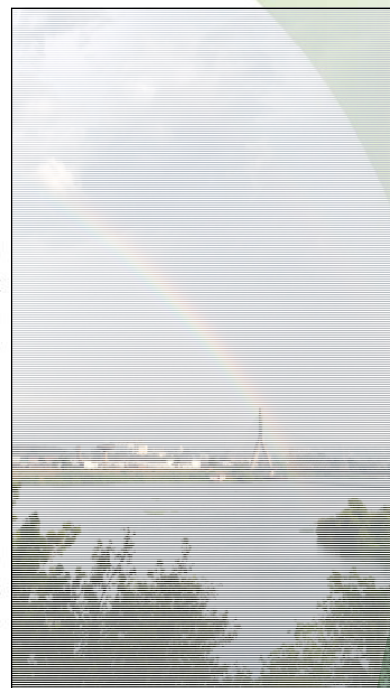
Students blessed the children and families at the Jinja Children's Hospital with smiles, care, laughter, games, and prayer. They observed the challenges of providing care with limited resources, space, and the challenges of receiving care around the hospital schedule. Students assisted in triage, HIV/AIDS clinic visits, vaccines, and spending time focusing on the spirit of the patients and families. From there, we spent a day at a local school. The students were able to observe the operations at an American-funded clinic, tour the compound, and experience the



daily routine in the school. The Uganda team was treated to a concert and dance, where students were eager to share their voices and traditional dance. After an enlightening bus ride to the Ibanda district, students taught at the Lutheran Church of Uganda Women's Conference. The team shared information on basic first aid, nutrition, and sanitary pad making. Delegates of the Lutheran Church of Uganda learned to sew reusable sanitary pads, make a tourniquet, and the importance of hygiene and diet while breast-feeding. The women attending the conference then took the information that they learned back to their congregations to teach others. The Uganda team then blessed a Lutheran

church in the Nakivale refugee settlement with sanitary pad kits, t-shirts, and balls and games for the children. The trip ended with a cruise to the Source of the Nile and a night of dinner and dancing at the Nderi Center in Kampala.

As I sat on the banks of the Nile, after a heavy rainstorm, I was reminded of God's promise as the most brilliant rainbow appeared overhead ending in the Nile. Amidst all of the hurt, poverty, illness, and need that we observed over the last week, He keeps His promises that He will not abandon us. That despite hardships, pain, and suffering they are happy because they know He is faithful. It was an honor and privilege to serve with Andrea, Ashton, Caitlyn, Daniella, Hannah, Jared, Kennedy, Maria, Natasha, Shalena, Tiera, and Tim. They set themselves aside, stepped out of their comfort zone, and changed lives.



church in the Nakivale refugee settlement with sanitary pad kits, t-shirts, and balls and games for the children. The trip ended with a cruise to the Source of the Nile and a night of dinner and dancing at the Nderi Center in Kampala.



### Who is Women of the Pearl?

Women in Uganda desire to grow in their relationship with the Lord but resources are limited. Our hope is to empower women by educating them in literacy, agriculture, business ownership, hygiene, and nutrition and ministry leadership. Through collaboration and partnerships, the women in Uganda will find a renewed hope rooted in faith. They will become equipped to make disciples and spread the love of Jesus to their congregations and villages. In addition, they will learn the skills needed to provide more consistently for their families.





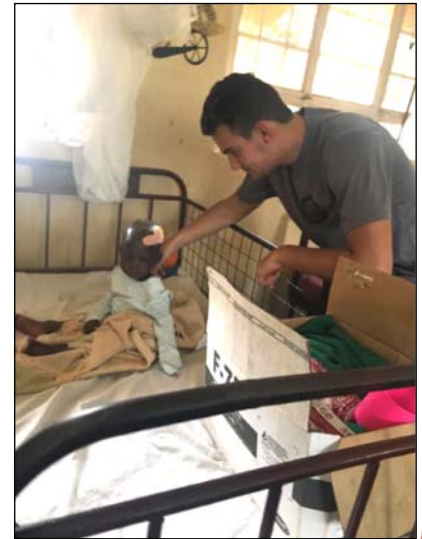
# This could be you!

In semesters to come, the school of nursing is eager to increase global education opportunities for Concordia nursing students. In Summer 2019, Concordia Nursing students from the Delta and Omega cohorts will have the opportunity to take part in clinical experiences in Belize, Guatemala, Kenya, Romania, Tanzania, and Uganda. We are grateful to have the support of the Concordia community as we continue to offer opportunities for our nursing students to give globally.

*We're thrilled to offer 6 locations for CUAU Nursing global trips for the Delta and Omega students in 2019! Those taking part in CUAU Nursing global trips will receive credit for N423 (Pediatrics Practicum) and/or N341 (Community Wellness Practicum). Here's more information:*

<u>Country</u>	<u>Timeframe*</u>	<u>Clinical credit</u>
Tanzania	January 10 - 26	N341
Belize	July 20 - Aug 4	N341 and N423
Guatemala	July 31 - August 15	N341 and N423
Kenya	July 20 - August 4	N341 and N423
Romania	July 10 - 26	N341 and N423
Uganda	July 20 - August 4	N341 and N423

Timeframe\* - please note that departure and return dates will occur within the timeframe noted for each trip.



**To learn more about global clinical opportunities in the school of nursing, contact Leah Tweedale [leah.tweedale@cuaa.edu](mailto:leah.tweedale@cuaa.edu) or (734) 995-7462.**



*Located at:*  
3475 Plymouth Road  
Ann Arbor MI 48105

*Mailing address:*  
4090 Geddes Road  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105