This summer MEDiC council members took their medical skills abroad to participate in a number of different service projects aimed at improving health around the globe. As part of their last summer of freedom students traveled to Guatemala, Thailand, Ghana, Uganda, Honduras and many other parts of the world to share the knowledge and skills they attained through MEDiC and first year courses. While the intent was to serve, each of them would attest that the experiences they had abroad enriched their understanding of medicine, politics, and themselves—all lessons that will impact their future practice of medicine. Here are a few of their stories.

Guatemala
Joe Hippensteel, Clinic Coordinator
I spent several days in San Lucas Toliman in central Guatemala with a small group of medical students where we helped a medical student group from Loyola University in Chicago operate satellite clinics in rural Guatemala. Nearly every patient reported headache, runny nose and fatigue, symptoms commonly seen at American clinics. Unlike the United States, many of the patient symptoms resulted from their inescapable environment: parasites found in drinking water, the constant smoke that furrowed from every home. The care that we were able to provide was fairly simple, but every patient was grateful. In a country where medical care can be extremely difficult to come by, we offered a solution to ailments, albeit temporary at times.

Experiences like these open our eyes to reality. While there are many issues with the healthcare system in the United States, they pale to the healthcare struggles that many other countries face. It is my hope that our brief visit provided comfort to a handful of individuals in need.

Ghana
Mark Kaeppler, Referrals Coordinator
Caitlin Wallach, Community Resources
We spent the month of July volunteering in Ghana with Unite For Sight, an international non-profit organization devoted to eliminating preventable blindness in developing nations. We traveled to rural villages near Accra and setup outreach clinics in churches or other local meeting places. Working with Ghanaian doctors, nurses and volunteers, we helped to assess patients’ visual acuities, screen them for eye disease and administer medications to those requiring them. Patients who were found to have cataracts or pterygium were offered surgery to have them removed, the cost of which was covered by funds raised by the American volunteers prior to their service. During the month of July alone, nearly three hundred sight-restoring surgeries were performed by Dr. Baah, the Ghanaian ophthalmologist working in partnership with Unite For Sight. Their mission to improve eye care in Ghana continues throughout the year.

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings from a busy MEDiC Council! For many of us, the second year of medical school started in mid-August, and we are deep into the fall semester. As you will read in this newsletter, a return to the books is quite a change from the exciting travels and activities that many of our council members were involved in over the summer months. We are very proud of our fellow council members for their dedication to service outside of MEDiC and for their adventurous spirits!

For those of us who stayed in Madison, there were some exciting MEDiC activities. During their new student orientation, the Physical Therapy students held a penny drive that raised $210 for MEDiC. And on June 26, last year’s Council President, Megan Schultz, and I had the opportunity to speak to members of the University of Wisconsin Foundation Board of Directors at their annual meeting. The goal of the presentation was to provide the Foundation members an example of one of the ways UW-Madison students give back to their communities. The Foundation members were impressed when Megan and I revealed that MEDiC is able to treat patients for fewer than $8 per person.

We expect the upcoming months to bring a number of new challenges, including the possible spread of H1N1 through our patient population and the impact of the continued economic slump on our fundraising efforts. Regarding the first challenge, MEDiC will be implementing a uniform approach for preventing, diagnosing, and treating the flu in each of our clinics. And to combat the economic situation, the Council is starting up a number of new fundraising projects, including selling the Bucky Book, T-shirts, and holding the First Annual TurkeyBowl! Read on to learn more about these exciting events!

The 2009-2010 Council thanks you for your continued support of and interest in MEDiC – it allow us to continue our work towards improving the health care of Madison’s underserved and uninsured.

Farah Kaiksow, 2009-2010 MEDiC Council President

MEDiC COUNCIL SERVES ABROAD
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Thailand
Tim Kufahl, Community Resources
This summer I went to Thailand with a group of UWSMPH medical, nursing and pharmacy students. We were hosted by public health students and faculty from Mahidol University in Bangkok. We spent our first week in Bangkok learning about the Thai health system and the country's health determinants, which helped us prepare a health intervention plan that we then implemented in rural Thailand. My specific project involved investigating the recent increase in the prevalence of diabetes in rural Thai adults.

Uganda
Carolynn Dude, Secretary
Rachel Lenhart, Medication Supply Coordinator
This summer we traveled to Uganda on a tropical medicine rotation organized by UW's Center for Global Health. During our month long stay, we shadowed doctors in Uganda's national referral hospital (Mulago Hospital, in Kampa la), participated in a nation-wide measles vaccination campaign and conducted our own public health program focusing on rural sanitation and hygiene. For the majority of our stay, we lived in a rural village two hours outside Kampala and had the opportunity to help at the various clinics based at the Kayunga district hospital. The hospital lacked both running water and stable electricity, but its staff still managed to provide basic health care to the hundreds of Ugandans living in the district. We found our experiences in Uganda both challenging yet rewarding, and we hope to return for another rotation in our fourth year!

Honduras
Danielle Ebben, Public Relations Director
In May I traveled to the Copán region of Honduras with members of the Christian Medical Association. In Copán we worked with the Rice Foundation to convert a small church into a temporary clinic that included pharmacy, ophthalmology, general care, and even dental. Every day of clinic was flooded with patients in need of various medical services. Many of the Hondurans walked as much as five hours to reach our clinic and were enthusiastically received by the Christian doctors that volunteered there. As students, our duties were to help with patient intake, perform basic physical exams, assist with all procedures, and many of us were used as interpreters. I was able to participate in the treatment of many ailments that I had never been exposed to in clinical experiences in the United States.

Providing medical care in Honduras was very emotionally draining. The Hondurans were incredibly kind and welcoming people and it was a blessing to be able to provide relief for their medical needs. The most difficult part was to see people with needs that we were incapable of addressing in that setting – medical conditions that could easily be treated in the United States but were impossible to treat with such limited means and time constraints. It was heartbreaking to turn people away. Despite our limitations, we were able to physically heal many people and extend hope to many who were in a desperate situation. Each day was filled with educationally and spiritually enriching experiences that revitalized my calling to medicine and service.
MEDiC Clinic Updates

MEDiC operates six different clinics in Madison. While all share the foundational goals of our organization, each clinic is distinct from the next in its needs, resources, patient population, and sometimes even has an exclusive set of volunteers. Taking this into consideration, we wanted to give the coordinators of each clinic the opportunity to offer a perspective from their clinic. Here’s what they had to say…

ARC House
By Desiree Godar, Coordinator

At ARC house we have found the physical therapy students to be an indispensable asset to our team. The PT consultations are especially effective at ARC because it is a chronic care clinic and PT students are able to follow up on their patients at subsequent visits. In addition to the physical problems that our patients present, many have chronic illnesses and often mental health issues which warrant frequent prescription medications. It is important in such situations to maintain continuity of care. The management of mental health and psychiatric prescriptions has become a large responsibility for volunteers at ARChouse. Pharmacy students have taught the other volunteers a lot about managing prescriptions and choosing medications, which is something about which most volunteers have no previous exposure.

Grace Clinic
By Jim Spencer and Dhaval Desai, Co-Coordinators

The Grace shelter usually sees reduced occupancy during the summer months as residents choose to sleep outdoors during these times. Consequently, we saw fewer patients in these months than we normally see. The clinic has been running smoothly now that we have gained some experience coordinating. Also, with the new academic year starting, we are excited to work with the new students who choose to volunteer at Grace in the coming months. Finally, look out for an article on Grace Clinic in an upcoming issue of On Wisconsin magazine!

Salvation Army
By Erika Ruud, Co-Coordinator

The Salvation Army has been very busy lately, and with the overflow family shelter (warming house) often full, the MEDiC clinic has been able to see many new patients over the past couple of months. The clinic coordinators and the new in-take workers were able to gain experience over the summer, and the new in-take system is working smoothly. Continuity is maintained week to week, and the in-take workers are able to provide time, compassion, and additional resources to each patient. As usual, the Salvation Army staff has been very generous with their resources, staff assistance, and space. We unfortunately had to say good bye to Barb Lindsay, our long-time point-person who was a joy to work with, who has retired after many years of admirable service. However, we are encouraged by the excellent new faces on the Salvation Army staff. MEDiC services have continued to expand, grow, and evolve at the Salvation Army between the main medical clinic, the physical therapy clinic, and the dental clinic. It is an exciting time, and we are thankful for the strong relationships MEDiC has with the shelter staff, volunteer physicians, and all others that make the clinic possible.

Michele Tracy Clinic
By Kristina Kraninger, Co-Coordinator

We are excited to begin a new year of clinics at Michele Tracy, which is at recession during the summer months. Shefaali and I have some great clinics planned for the year including dental health, respiratory health, sexual health, first aid, nutrition and exercise. Once again this year we will be able to provide flu vaccinations to our patients all thanks to the efforts of our wonderful clinic doctor, Dr. Greg Sheehy. This year, we want students to leave Michele Tracy with a better understanding of the importance of preventative healthcare.

Safe Haven Psychiatric Clinic
By Danielle Ries, Coordinator

Safehaven Medic Clinic will soon have an exciting addition to our volunteer team! Soon residents will be able to volunteer in our clinic and we have 7 residents that have expressed interest in participating! The residents will soon be coming to Safehaven to observe how the clinic operates, and I’d like to welcome them to Medic!

Southside Clinic
By Ebba Hjertstedt, Co-Coordinator

It was a bustling summer on South Park, caring for about 150 patients. Likely due to the hard economic times, the waiting room continues to be full of activity every weekend. Also, we have a new resident dermatology clinic coordinator, Dr Phil Hsu. He is enthusiastic about starting and will run his first clinic on September 19th.

Turkey Bowl
By Abby Taub, Student Scheduler

This November MEDiC is holding the First Annual MEDiC Turkey Bowl. It will be a flag football game of first year health professional students pitted against the upperclassmen. Medical, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Physical Therapy students will participate. This event was designed as a fundraiser that would simultaneously promote team building and foster relationships across health care disciplines. The game will take place at the McClimon Memorial Track and Field on Monday, November 23 at 4:00 pm and will be refereed by our very own Dean of Students, Dean McBride. Please help support the MEDiC volunteers by coming to the game or, if you would like more information about sponsoring a team and getting your name on the 2009 Turkey Bowl T-shirt, contact Abby Taub at taub@wisc.edu.
Bucky Book & T-Shirt Sale
By Danielle Ebben, Public Relations Coordinator

As a fundraising event MEDiC is selling Bucky Books! These books are full of valuable coupons good at hundreds of businesses around the Madison area. They cost $35, $15 of which goes directly to MEDiC. That is enough money to provide medical services to two of our patients!

In addition, we are selling 2009-2010 MEDiC T-shirts for $12. They are a brand new stylish design, available in Red or Blue.

If you are interested in purchasing either a Bucky Book or a T-shirt please contact us at Medic@rso.wisc.edu

MEDiC Volunteers of the Month
April 2009: Dr. Patrick McBride
May 2009: Dr. Gerald Ryan
June 2009: Dr. David Deci
July 2009: Dr. Bruce Slater
August 2009: Joseph Greene

How You Can Help

Donating Medications:
We greatly appreciate donations of medications listed on MEDiC’s formulary. Due to our inability to monitor and follow most patients with chronic conditions, many chronic care medications are not useful in our clinics, especially those second line medications that would be too costly for our uninsured patients to continue using. Our current policies allow us to distribute pharmaceuticals that are less than 2 years past their expiration date, but we ask that liquid medications are less than 3 months past their expiration date. No surgical equipment or accessories are used in the MEDiC Clinics. We are not able to accept any medications that have been prescribed to a patient.

If you are interested in donating medications to MEDiC, please contact the MEDiC office at:

608-265-4972
Medic-drugs@lists.wisc.edu

Physician Volunteers:
MEDiC is always looking for physician volunteers! While MEDiC provides primary care, physicians from all specialties are encouraged to volunteer. If you’re interested in providing care to the underserved populations of Madison while working with health professional students or would simply like more information, please contact the MEDiC physician scheduler:

Kerri Austin: scheduling.medic@gmail.com

*Our liability limits us to volunteers who have UW-SMPH teaching appointments*