

and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.” (Colossians 2:8, NIV)

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God Has Good Plans For Me

By Katherine Stein

On October 5, 2024, Campbell University sent a mission team to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic to provide medical assistance to underserved communities. The group consisted of twelve medical students, one pharmacy student, one Masters of Pharmaceutical Sciences (MSPS) student, four providers, and various volunteers of differing backgrounds and skill sets. They traveled from Santo Domingo to different villages that ranged from 15 minutes to 3 hours outside of the city. Over the course of four clinic days, they examined and treated over 650 patients with the help of eight to twelve Spanish and Creole translators.

I was the only pharmacy student who attended the trip as part of my fourth year APPE rotations. I felt God calling me

to the pharmacy profession in 2017 after my husband passed away from ALS, a terminal condition connected to his military service. His diagnosis in 2016 piqued my interest in healthcare and after doing some research, I knew I wanted to serve others through pharmacy.

Since I was the only person on the trip with a pharmacy education, I was placed in charge of the pharmacy department. I organized the medication racks, filled prescriptions, provided counseling, performed nightly inventory checks, and collaborated with the providers to determine appropriate treatments based on medication availability. Local churches allowed us to use their buildings for clinics, and patients were often lined up at the door before we arrived each morning.

After the initial set up, the entire team gathered in a circle around the perimeter of the room as a local church pastor led the team in singing praises to God, followed by prayer. The patients were then invited inside to have their vitals taken. They were passed from triage onto a medical team for evaluation where they were assessed for their chief complaint and any secondary complaints, as well as for ophthalmology and osteopathic manipulative medicine (OMM) needs. Clinic workflow varied slightly depending on spacing, but the patients rotated between receiving





care for their eyes, OMM, and pharmacy until they had seen every necessary station. They were then prayed over by a ministry team before heading home.

One thing that stood out to me on the trip was the way the medical students connected with the patients and broke through barriers. While patients' walls were often down by the time they got to me in the pharmacy, I heard stories each night about how the medical students worked to build relationships and trust through listening and empathizing with patients during triage and assessment. I watched patients hugging and shaking hands with the medical students at the end of each clinic day as they loaded the bus.



I also watched the team bond with the children. The team took turns playing with the children outside while their parents were examined, and there were always willing arms to hold a baby if needed. Those who volunteered with the children's ministry played games, drew with chalk, blew bubbles, and made balloon animals with the village children each day. The connections with the children touched the students' lives in very special ways. One specific encounter occurred on the final clinic day when I was able to leave the pharmacy to play in the streets with the children and pass out stickers.

I handed one little girl a sticker and said to her in Spanish, "Can you read it?" She answered, "No." So I bent down and asked if I could read it to her. It said, "Dios tiene buenas planes para mi", which means "God has good plans for me." She reached her arms around my neck to give me a hug and when she pulled back, she said (in Spanish), "God has good plans for you, too" and she stuck the sticker right in the middle of my forehead. Sometimes

God speaks to us through the simple voice of a child and uses others to encourage us on our path.

This trip served as a reminder that I should always utilize the gifts the Lord has given me to serve others. I found it extremely rewarding to be able to apply the knowledge I've built and the skills I've developed over the last three years in a way that was impactful to others' well-being. I formed lasting friendships with the medical students and was able to put interprofessional collaboration into practice in a high-paced environment. The trip was a huge success for all who were involved, and I'm very grateful for the memories and personal discoveries that came out of the experience. I can't wait to see what the Lord does next in my life and I am amazed at the ways He has moved through the hearts and hands of Campbell's students, faculty, and staff.



Please go to the following link on YouTube to see a video highlight of the trip: <https://youtu.be/sXiWnjQ6P1g?si=Dbd1ElzcaxUBp8Nn>

This video was put together by one of the medical student's wives, Amber Mattern, who came and volunteered with the children's ministry group.



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