

Kingsborough Community College nursing students participate in a transcultural experience in Ecuador

On June 19, 2011, at 1 AM, eight third-semester clinical nursing students and three nursing faculty and staff members boarded a plane for Ecuador and began a journey that is likely to change them forever.

The faculty at KCC provided the clinical nursing students the opportunity to take part in the life of another country and to become clinically immersed in its culture.

Professor George W. Contreras, director of the Allied Health Programs at KCC, initiated the project by submitting a proposal that was selected for a President's Faculty Innovation Award to fund a week-long trip to Ecuador for nursing faculty and third semester clinical nursing students.

The students worked in several hospitals including the Ecuadorean Institute of Social Security (IESS), Provincial Hospital Dr. Verdi Cevallos Balda, and Hospital General Rodriguez Zambrano in the cities of Portoviejo and Manta. They visited the Orphanage Casa Hogar De Belen and distributed toys and clothing to the children in residence. A visit to a not-for-profit organization (Fundacion de Ninos San Lucas) opened the door for future visits. Student participants plan to organize a fund raising effort for the Fundacion



Following a presentation to President Peruggi, Provost Stuart Suss, and other administration officials, the nursing students posed for a photo with KCC officials. L-R, Yenni Ortega, Krystie Prezioso, Gaby Gilman Sophia Bogen, Raitza Butcher, Krystal Charles, Noline Plummer, Alicia Nugent and President Peruggi. 2nd Row, Rachel Singer, Loretta DiLorenzo, Coleen Kumar, Stephan Marcelin, Reza Fakhari, Liz Basile, Denise Giachetta-Ryan and George Contreras. Below the KCC Ecuador team poses for photo in Ecuador.



Ninos San Lucas through the Nursing Club.

Three of the eight students spoke fluent Spanish, while other students relied on translators, Spanish/English dictionaries and the unspoken language of caring.

Hospital experiences included an operating room rotation, several shifts in the emergency room and medical inpatient units. Students honed their assessment skills and became proficient in more advanced skills such as performing

EKGs, starting intravenous lines and inserting urinary catheters under the guidance of their faculty preceptors. Professor Coleen

Kumar and Ms. Kristie Prezioso worked alongside nursing faculty from each of the host universities.

Memoranda of Understanding were signed between KCC and the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí and the Universidad Técnica de Manabí to continue this immersion experience for students from all three universities.

Community and service-learning experiences included participation in a health fair in Manta and a mobile health clinic in

Portoviejo. Students worked alongside university students screening Ecuadorean citizens for such chronic illnesses as diabetes and hypertension.

The KCC students were struck by the humbleness and gratitude of the Ecuadorean people who were grateful for every kindness. The nursing students also provided health education for those who attended the fair.

They experienced firsthand the frustration that poverty and other societal factors place on the management of illness. Several students went home with a little less money and a great deal richer for the experience

"The trip to Ecuador was a phenomenally rich and transformative experience, at every level, for both our students and faculty," said KCC President Regina Peruggi.