TRIO Carnival Entertainment—Sept. 21!

It was a beautiful night for Knockerball fun!

A night of Carnival fun was experienced with cotton candy, hot dogs/corn dogs and other goodies along with games and prizes as a way to get to know other TRIO students and staff.
UMary Medical Mission Trip to Guatemala  By Tessa Wickstrom

During the week of May 7th-14th, I had the privilege of traveling with my fellow classmates and professor to Antigua, Guatemala. The trip consisted of 9 nursing students in total, and we volunteered through The God’s Child Project. The God’s Child Project is a nonpolitical, international humanitarian organization that develops and administers health, education, family foster care, community development, and human rights protection systems in the world’s poorest nations.

While in Guatemala, we volunteered at Casa Jackson, a hospital for malnourished children where we participated in a vegetable distribution for local families, and we also built a home for two families in need.

Words cannot describe the emotions that I felt during this trip. They ranged from extreme gratitude to a suffocating heartache, sometimes occurring simultaneously! For seven days, I was exposed to colorful buildings, vibrant clothing, and a culture rich with heritage and pride. I was also exposed to a level of poverty that I had not yet experienced before in the United States.

I will cherish this experience for a lifetime because it showed me the value of community and service. We were gifted by the hospitality of the Guatemalan people who worked at the Dreamers Center and learned the importance of living moderately.

The definition of Global Stewardship which is a student’s ability to “respect, and be critically aware of oneself and the diverse world to protect and strengthen natural, cultural, and social environments” (University of Mary N.D), has taken on a new depth of importance in my life after my experience abroad. I saw firsthand the difference that 9 students can make in the lives of others, and how much of a difference others can make in the lives of 9 students.

Tessa spending time with local Guatemalan children

Using nursing skills to make a difference

TRIO Student Support Services Fall Grant Awards

Book and Merit Grant Awards

Fifty-two of our SSS students qualified for Fall Merit Grants based on their Spring GPA. Amounts awarded ranged from $250 - $500 for GPAs ranging from 3.0 to 4.0. The following students qualified to receive a $500 grant for achieving a 4.0: Karmela Bachman, Hector Chavez, Sara Dorner, Erika Fagerstrom, MaryJo Guilbert, Annie Hill and Kiersten Salazar. Congratulations! SSS Students receiving the $50 book grant for a GPA of 2.0 and higher totaled 69 students. A total of $21,900.00 was awarded toward the Book/Merit Grants.

Supplemental Grant Awards

Thirteen students received supplemental grant monies totaling $16,900 dispersed. Pell eligible students had to complete an application that fulfilled specific criteria along with an essay telling us why they should be selected for this grant. Congratulations to all who received an award!
As I walked by the poster for the fifth time that day, I finally stopped and took the time to read the fine print, “Spend 10 days on a medical mission trip to Ayavari Puno, Peru.” I made my way to the Study Abroad office and signed myself up. It was official, I was going to fly 4,653 miles away from home and land in a country where I understood only a few general terms of their language.

Everything about this trip was going to be a brand-new experience for me. It was my second time flying, but first time having to switch planes. It was my first time seeing an ocean, even though it was pitch black when I finally got to see it. It was also my first time on a mission trip. With all the exciting firsts came some negative firsts. It was the first time I had to make sure I didn’t drink any water, unless it was bottled. It was the first time where I carried toilet paper with me everywhere and that I always threw it in the garbage and not down the septic system. It was also the first time I managed to be sick to my stomach for 10 days straight.

I decided that no matter how many negative firsts I was going to have, I would be optimistic about everything.

I learned how to be optimistic about every negative by doing two things every day. I decided to make a travel journal for my experience and I made sure to write in it every single day. In my journal, I included those two things, which were a daily count of something unique that I had seen that day and a God moment/experience for that day. For someone who was unsure if she should still be a nurse and was slowly becoming lost in her faith; I thought there is no way that I will have a God moment/experience everyday let alone once during this whole trip, but boy was I wrong.

Our first day in Ayavari was one of the hardest days for me throughout the trip because it was Mother’s Day and this was the first time in my whole life that I was not with my mom on Mother’s Day. I had a minimum of five minutes to quickly send a snap, my only way of communication, to my mother thanking her for everything she has ever done for me. Half ways through my snap video I broke down and started to cry. I wanted to go home right then, but I couldn’t and I am forever thankful that I didn’t. I had experienced my first God moment that day and it changed my perspective for the rest of the trip.

God Moment #1: The families gradually filled the school yard of the Salesian Sisters where we were staying. The sisters and the girls at the school decided to throw a Mother’s Day festival for both their mothers and for us, their visitors. We were told to form a giant circle and to repeat what the speaker was singing. As the speaker started the song, a tear immediately rolled down my cheek because this song was “You are my Sunshine”, which is the song that my grandmother and mother sang to me as a child.

Through the sadness of the day that tear was full of happiness. Though I was not with my family on that day that song proved that their presence would be with me no matter where I went in the world and because of that, I knew this trip would change my life forever. Every experience and every God moment that I had for the next 9 days pulled me closer and closer to God and helped me realize that I couldn’t do any other career besides nursing because I lived for the presence of people and to know that I was able to help them. We spent the rest of our trip doing various medical work from home visits to a school for children with disabilities to setting up a clinical in a small town. Just our presence put the biggest smile on the locals’ faces. They appreciated what little they had, and for us to come and help them with their health problems was a God send in their eyes. They were so thankful for us, but in truth, I believe that they made more of a difference in my life then I made in theirs.

I strongly suggest that any individual who has questioned or thought about taking a trip abroad should do it. You will find a way to afford it and you will find a way to take the time for it. Do not let an opportunity of the lifetime pass you by because you are afraid to step out of your comfort zone. I struggle with severe anxiety and I almost didn’t take this opportunity for the fear of my anxiety, but I was the calmest I had ever been. I thank God and the University of Mary every single day for this opportunity and I can’t wait to go back again this coming May.
TRIO was privileged to host Bert Gervais as a guest speaker the evening of Oct. 3.

Bert Gervais a.k.a. “The Mentor Guy” is one of the nation’s top college speakers on mentorship and using a positive self-image to help students obtain a higher education. Berg is recognized by USA Today and Fox News as one of the top young leaders in the country.

Having been born in Haiti with limited means, Bert quickly realized the value of seizing opportunities. He emigrated from Haiti when he was seven, with few resources and separated from his mother. He overcame obstacles and obtained his college degree where he started his first Internet business, was president of multiple student organizations and played Division I football. Bert combined his passion and personal experiences to create a dynamic message that has inspired audiences in 30 states.

Don’t let your “lid” stop you from achieving!

With personal stories and activities, Bert challenged students to rise to their full potential.

Like us on Facebook: UMary TRIO
Follow us on Twitter: @UMary_TRIO
Hashtag with us: #WeAreTRIO

Halloween
Time Management
10:30 a.m.
TSB 204

Find yourself procrastinating... or running out of time to study? Come learn how to better manage your time! Student Success Center Halloween Potluck to follow.