From Meghann Seal, Senior, St. David’s School of Nursing Student

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When asked to share some of my personal experiences from Peru, I was left speechless. How do I put such an amazing time into words effectively and attempt to do it justice? Well, here goes!

Prior to departing for Peru, I was unsure of what really to expect from the trip. I was excited to travel and hopefully acquire some new insight into the nursing profession. I was actually able to learn more about myself as a nurse than I ever could in a classroom. I feel truly lucky to be a part of such a caring, artful profession. In Lima, we were able to contribute to a wonderful volunteer organization called Operation Smile, which focuses on cleft lip and cleft palate repair in underprivileged areas, globally. With the help of the other volunteers from all over the world, we were able to help admit patients prior to surgery, contribute in pre, intra, and post op procedures and monitoring, and observe multiple cleft lip and/or palate repairs. It was heartwarming to see how a little volunteering of our time changed some of these families’ lives forever--everyone deserves a chance to smile. From Lima, we traveled down the coast of Peru to a small town called Vina Vieja. Our professor, Dr. Arevalo-Flechas, had already established a rapport within the community and I felt as if we were welcomed like family. We provided supplies we had gathered from the states to help restock their local clinic. A CPR training class was offered in the clinic for the local teens and adults. As students, we were able to observe infant and child wellness exams at the local elementary school/day care. Dental students traveled from Lima to meet us at the clinic and we performed blood glucose and blood pressure screening for the community, as they provided dental care.

We spent a week with the families of the community, with their children, learning about their culture, customs and beautiful country. It was truly hard to say good-bye. I have endless thanks and limitless appreciation for the experience and opportunity made available to us in Peru 2012. I hope I get the chance to do travel there again soon.