

GLOBAL EXPERIENCES AT RIVIER UNIVERSITY (*Rivier Today*, Fall 2013)

Haiti is our classroom

For 10 participants in Associate Professor Dr. Susan Barbaro's biology class, Haiti was their classroom for a week this summer. During this biology field experience, the group tested and analyzed various sources of water throughout the Pignon region of Haiti with the goal of assessing its safety for human consumption. The team then educated the Haitian people about the importance of safe drinking water and introduced them to causes of water borne illnesses. Students observed first-hand the challenges of enriching the lives of people in an impoverished area.

Dr. Barbaro and some of the students who accompanied her on the trip shared some insights about their experience.

Q: What did you expect going into this trip? How did your experience differ from your perceptions of what you might experience?

Dr. Barbaro: I expected to expect the unexpected. I knew that we needed to be flexible and that we would be facing challenges that would require some imagination and rethinking to work through. We did a great job. I also expected to be emotionally affected by what I saw.



Chris Brooks, Class of 2013: I expected hardship, poverty and misery, and I got those in spades, but what I didn't expect was the beauty of the land and the strength of the people. They know they have it bad, and they take nothing for granted, but they constantly surprised me with the sheer amount of effort they put into living.

Jonathan Nutt, Class of 2012: To be perfectly honest, I had no expectations going into our trip to Haiti. I think this is the ideal way to travel—to go forward with an open mind and no specific expectations. It allows you to truly live in the moment and have a greater appreciation of the overall experience.

Alie Nutt, Class of 2014: I really didn't have many expectations going into this trip because I have never experienced a country as poor as this one. When we got into Port-au-Prince and drove into Jacsonville we saw poverty at its worst and it was truly heart wrenching and opened my eyes to the reality of how these people live their everyday lives.

Q: In what ways did this trip change you?

Dr. Barbaro: We have so much, consume so much, and want so much. Since my arrival home, I'm now looking at my own life and personal needs differently. I'm reassessing what makes me happy and changing priorities.

Chris Brooks: I take nothing for granted. Not the electricity I use or the education I'm receiving or the water I drink. I have become somewhat jaded, looking with disdain at the extravagant excesses of our culture and the frivolous things we hold important.

Jonathan Nutt: So much about me was changed as a result of this trip. I saw the reality of what our world is truly like outside of the walls of our privileged nation. I came to realize that in the grand scheme of things, we are all only human beings—put aside all of the minor differences and we are essentially identical.

Alie Nutt: This trip has made me more eager than ever to start traveling and helping people who truly need it. It has also made me work harder both in school and in work because I have realized that I have this opportunity and I shouldn't take that for granted.

Nurses serve in Senegal

This December and again in January 2014, Rivier nursing students and faculty will travel to Senegal for the 'Rivier University Institute for Global Health' project to complement coursework and academics with real-world experience and service in another country. Rivier's Division of Nursing recognizes the value of an immersion clinical experience, and this is a unique opportunity for a trans-cultural health care experience. The project is intended to connect and support communities by creating and sustaining two related care centers, providing comprehensive health care, and more—and aims to connect students, refugees, faculty and staff. Several Sisters of the Presentation of Mary—Rivier's founding order—who reside in Senegal, will also participate, tying the project into Rivier's history, heritage and mission.

Speaking global languages

The Departments of Global Engagement and Modern Languages kicked off a new Global Language Tables program in September 2013, offering an opportunity for Rivier students, faculty and staff to enjoy a meal in Rivier's newly renovated dining center while conversing with others in another language. Every Wednesday afternoon throughout the semester will offer a Spanish language opportunity, and every Thursday will focus on the French language. Speakers at all levels are encouraged to participate in these lively on-campus global discussions. ■