

HAKUNA MATATA



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Mercyhurst University pre-med student gets hands-on experience in Kenya



Deciding to sign-up with the Medical Project in Kenya with Projects Abroad was the right choice for 20-year-old Shauna Novobilsky, a biochemistry student at Mercyhurst University in Pennsylvania. Shauna spent one month volunteering in a

Kenyan public clinic with Projects Abroad where she was able to gain practical experience: “I have always wanted to learn more about medicine and I saw this as an opportunity to learn and, at the same time, do something worthwhile.”

Based at Langalanga Health Center, a small clinic which serves patients from poorer communities, Shauna’s helping hand was very much appreciated: “The clinic is understaffed and there is a lack of resources. There are large numbers of patients on a daily basis; so this is where the volunteers offer much needed help by providing an extra hand. I have been rotating between different departments; shadowing and assisting the clinical officers and nurses, but after I gained their trust they allowed me to practice what I had learned from them by letting me run a department on my own.”

Shauna has had the opportunity to observe and assist in various wards; from weighing babies, giving injections and vitamin A in the Child Care department. In Family Planning she helped administer injections, remove implants and take vitals, at the pharmacy and the TB clinic Shauna supplied the patients with their prescribed medicine. Shauna has also worked in the lab where she has run TB and other tests “This experience has taught me a lot about the basics of medicine: how to do charting, stitches, give injections and much more; but the most important lesson has been about the patient-doctor relationship, an experience I am sure will come handy in future.”

Although things are quite different from the USA, it is has not been difficult for Shauna to adapt. “It was a shock at first, when we had to improvise due to lack of equipment, however I believe this was a positive lesson that will make me a better doctor.” She adds.

Shauna’s host mother, Mama Jane, has contributed hugely in helping Shauna adapt to the Kenyan culture. She has introduced her to Kenyan food and encouraged her to go out and meet the locals. “I love it here! Kenya has been the most rewarding experience of my life, I am returning home to get my medical degree but I am sure to come back to Kenya after medical school.”

Kaj Munk College graduate, Marisca Windhorst, inspires little ones at a Kenyan orphanage.



Having worked and saved for years, 18-year-old Marisca Windhorst from Hoofddorp in Northern Holland was left with the heavy choice of how to best use her hard earned savings. This was no easy task for Marisca, but after consulting with her parents, she chose to help the less privileged by travelling and volunteering for two months with Projects Abroad.

As a Care volunteer, Marisca was placed at Sure 24, a home that doubles as a school, orphanage and a church in the city of Nakuru. "I have always wanted to experience the Kenyan culture and also help those who are less privileged." With over one hundred children, between the ages of 4 and 18-years-old, all needing an education and care, Marisca has been a teacher, friend and an inspiration to these children.

The members of staff at Sure 24 are in the minority and the presence of volunteers is a huge help to them: "We help in giving the children extra attention; connecting with the children has been a great thing for me. I have also worked with the older children, especially at the water purification project, a project like carpentry, metal work and farming that is aimed at giving the youth skills and ideas of earning a sustainable income. We bring to life the idea of young people being able to achieve huge and great things and, for the first time, helping them ignore their existing problems, especially because they are orphans and from a poor background."

Marisca was always busy at Sure 24; assisting in the classroom, playing with the children, taking care of the very young kids, doing dishes and laundry. "Your own initiative is pretty important, the staff gives you the space and the freedom to choose which department you feel comfortable working in, there is a lot of work to do and you hardly find yourself being idle. The staff members are very good and helpful and it is a good experience working with them."

“It has also been a learning experience; with everything being so different, it gave me the opportunity to grow as a person and this will be valuable for the rest of my life. The experience has also been different and from the western culture I grew up in; the people, the food, customs and the general way of life. Thanks to my host mum, she explained the differences which made me settle in and come to love the whole experience.”

Outside work Marisca has fallen in love with the nature and the wildlife: “It was amazing to see the wild animals, especially lions, giraffes and elephants. Kenya is a beautiful place to visit and live. I would highly recommend people back at home to come visit and above all make sure they help the less privileged.”

We hope great stories like these inspire others to help Projects Abroad to make a difference, and by doing so, learn something themselves along the way.

2 Weeks Special



In February Projects Abroad Kenya marked her first anniversary of operations in the country, come July the first group of 2 weeks special volunteers came in, having their work and stay schedule arranged from day 1 to the last, the care, medical and conservation groups with the first care group having left the Ronaken children and teachers with smiles. At the center the group of five girls, namely Bronagh Hennessy, Alexis Nunes, Rachel Serafin, Jessica Kocan and Ashley Hurst, repaired

an old and dilapidated classroom that was previously used under very bad conditions.



Dusty floor, worn-out walls no windows and an almost falling out door, were turned to an attractive, well painted wall, a cemented floor, replaced door, new windows, a blackboard and educational materials painted on the walls. Besides this the girls also spent time with the babies at Kardesh Ber Nea, played with the Hope Centre children and also donated playing materials at Hope.

On the weekend they visited Lake Nakuru national park which is a host of rhinos, giraffe, buffalos, lions, leopards amongst other animals. Lake Baringo, Menengai Crater which is the second largest crater in Africa and also Thomson falls.

At the conservation Project, 2 weeks special volunteers will be involved with several activities in the conservancy; they will take part with giraffe survey, mammal survey Scats and prints and camera traps. Bird census, Plant identification/collection and educational talks will be held on several topics: i.e. Giraffe ecology and conservation

in Kenya, bird surveys and census techniques, documentary and guided talks. The volunteers will also visit Lake Baringo, Lake Nakuru, Elsamere Conservation Centre where they will learn more on wetlands. To cap it all they will also hold a community outreach where they will cleanup Gilgil town.

Facelift by the 2 weeks special

For the two weeks they volunteered in Kenya Bronagh Hennessy, Alexis Nunes, Rachel Serafin, Jessica Kocan and Ashley Hurst were involved in refurbishing a classroom at Ronaken Education Center, here are some before and after photos.

Before



After

