

# Leaving the classroom behind

## Students help families find healthy diets

By Rachel Barry  
THE BATTALION

Changing personal eating habits can be challenging enough, but a group of A&M students learned how challenging it can be to try to change the eating habits of entire Mexican villages.

Dr. George Bates, a professor of biochemistry and nutrition at A&M, took 17 A&M students to small villages surrounding Valle de Solis where malnutrition was rampant and nutritional education almost nonexistent.

"The problem is the poor people don't have the transportation to get into the city, and they don't understand about nutrition and the need to have a variety of food," Bates said.

In an effort to help the villagers overcome this problem, Bates organized a program in which students traveled to the villages and examined children and household conditions. They also interviewed mothers about the nutrition and hygiene habits of their families. The students who went on the trip earned six hours of credit.

Kathy Schulte, a junior nutrition major, said the students divided into five groups to examine the children and conduct surveys throughout each village. One group performed clinical assessments on the children.

"We would look at them from head to toe," she said. "Then we would make observations about their condition and note any physical problems."

Edna Sanchez, a senior community health major who went on the trip, said that after talking with mothers to find out what foods they most commonly served and what minerals were lacking in the families' diets, the students taught the mothers how to change their habits.

"We got everything together for the mother so she could prepare food from what she already had," she said.

Sometimes what the mother had was not much to work from. Schulte said that some of the villages they worked in didn't have running water or electricity.

Bates said the severity of malnutrition in some villages was exceptionally high.

"Some of the villages have twice the level of malnutrition the U.N. considers an emergency," he said.

After a day of examining children and teaching mothers how to prepare healthy foods for their families, the students held nutritional education classes for the village.

"We did skits talking

## Hands-on experience gives students insight to Native American culture

By Amy Uptmor  
THE BATTALION

While some students took classes in other areas, others slaved through mindless summer jobs, 13 Aggies trekked to Montana for seven weeks of archeological training, cultural awareness and lessons in life.

No, this is not a local version of MTV's *Road Rules*, but rather one of the nation's foremost archeological field schools.

The second annual Northern Rocky Mountain Field School was an intensive training in archeological excavation, concentrating on ancient American Indian sites.

While in Montana, students spent weeks surveying and excavating sites. The group also took field trips to Glacier Park, Grand Tetons and Yellowstone National Parks and the World Heritage Site in Canada.

In addition to seven A&M staff members, students were also joined by American Indian representatives.

Dr. Alston Thoms, an A&M professor of anthropology and director of the field school, said the American Indians had mixed reactions to the students' presence.

"Many Indians don't like outsiders, especially archeologists," Thoms said. "They see us as intruders. Many others were OK with our presence."

The group worked primarily with the Kootenai Indians, whose pow-wow they attended on July 4. Thoms said he was particularly excited that the students were able to work with the Indians in the field for an entire day. The students searched for their own food, built their own fires and cooked in traditional American Indian fashion.

Laura Bergstresser, a junior anthropology major who went on the trip, said it was hands-on experiences that made the trip educational.

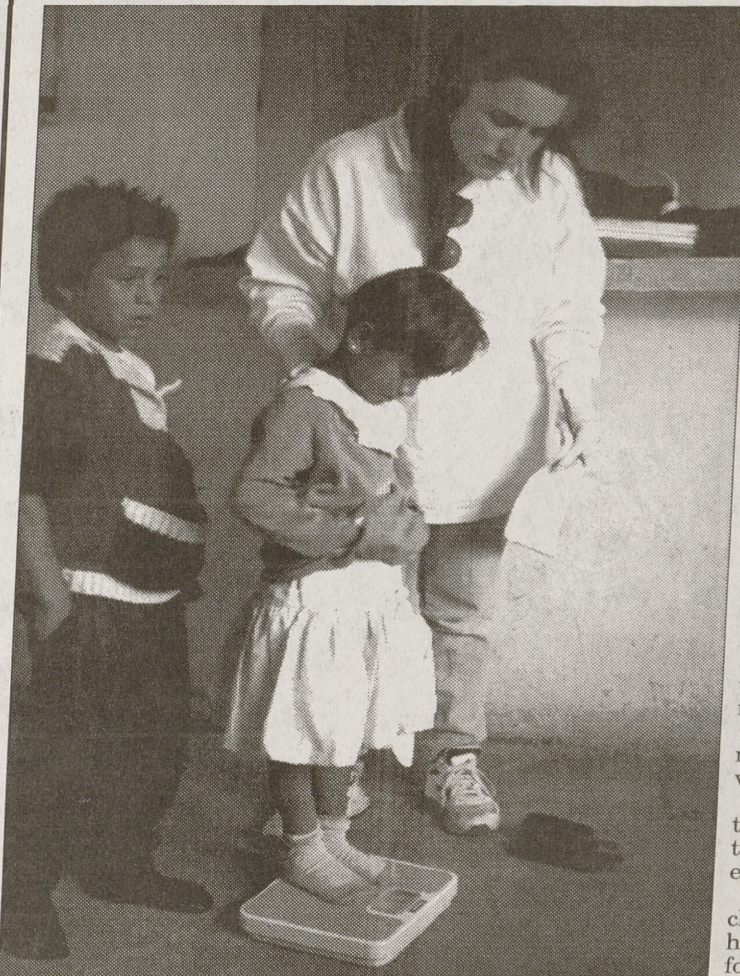
"We didn't just learn about Native Americans — we learned how hard it was for them to live off the land," Bergstresser said.

Bergstresser said she was also impressed by how the students were able to use everything they learned.

"Everything was immediately applicable," Bergstresser said. "As soon as we learned something in class, we would go into the field and actually do it."

But the students were not learning about archeology for the sake of learning alone. The group was contracted to do actual

See MONTANA, Page 5



Adri Peterson, a nutrition major who went on the trip to Mexico, gives a child a physical exam.

See MEXICO, Page 5

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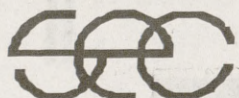
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