

# Humanos Medicas

Beyond study abroad: A&M students, professors learn while volunteering. One participant shares his experience in rural Mexico.

Five Texas A&M students and two professors joined students and doctors from the Humanos Medicas organization on a medical mission trip in rural Mexico during Summer 2003.

I was one of the A&M students, initially a part of a 12-person Journalism Mexico Study Abroad group, who agreed to stay longer to participate in the Humanos Medicas mission.

Humanos Medicas in my best Spanish translation means "human medical hands," which only begins to describe what this organization does in rural Mexico.

Dr. Debra Blakely, visiting assistant professor of journalism, led the original Journalism Study Abroad group and saw an opportunity in association with Dr. Miguel Ahumada, dean of La Salle Medical University. With the help of the Texas A&M Student Affairs Office, she secured the funds necessary for us to extend our stay and participate in this important medical mission.

Michelle Smith, a senior Spanish major; Steve Ramirez, a senior international studies major; Jonathan Kirkland, a senior economics major, MBA student Alvar Baldarrama and I were assigned to help with a medical research project under the direction of Dr. Nilesh Chatterjee, assistant professor of the Health & Kinesiology, and Blakely.



Our main goal was to record Humanos Medicas activities to study the group and make improvements for future medical missions.

My assignment as a science and technology journalism master's student was to act as the photojournalist for the mission.

The group of 100 medical students, 12 doctors, 15 staff and seven Aggies left for the central Mexican town of Cholula, Puebla, in late July.

Medical students, along with consulting doctors, organized general medicine, pediatrics, psychology, nutrition, optometry and dental clinics to provide health care to local residents. Many of the patients I spoke with after their visits with

Humanos Medicas students said this was the only time that they could see a doctor.

After finishing work each day we traveled back from the rural communities to Cholula, where our hosts provided dormitory-style sleeping arrangements and food.

The clinics were held for three days in the four rural adjacent areas, with more than 1,000 patients receiving examinations and care.

Learning opportunities were twofold. Medical students gained experience from treating patients, and Aggies developed interviewing and research techniques.

Humanos Medicas missions had gone relatively unknown in the local media, so I hosted a 20-

minute live broadcast at ABC Radio in Mexico City, where I had interned. The last five weeks of our 10-week study abroad consisted of internships with public relations firms, travel companies and major media outlets in Mexico City.

Humanos Medicas will embark on another medical mission this spring, and A&M plans to work with them again this summer. The Study Abroad office is currently accepting applications.

— Story, photos by Robert Wilcox

Pictured top left: Senior economics major Jonathan Kirkland interviews local residents while practicing his Spanish.

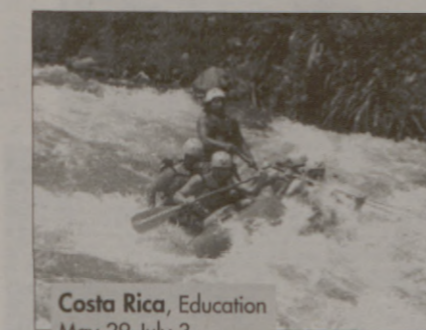
Top center: Spanish conquerors built 250 churches over Mayan temples in the town of Cholula, site of the free medical clinics hosted by Humanos Medicas.

Top right: Medical student Carolina Munoz takes time to play with children from the rural village of San Tehuiloyacan.

Left: Students from Mexico City-area medical schools, accompanied by doctors, diagnose and perform minor treatments for those who cannot afford medical care.

## Go Away!

Study Abroad takes Texas A&M students across the world in different academic programs. Illustrated are 14 of the 43 faculty-led program destinations for 2004, with the name of the faculty contact for each program. For information, contact the Study Abroad Programs office by visiting Bizzell Hall West, calling 845-0544 or taking a look online at [studyabroad.tamu.edu](http://studyabroad.tamu.edu).



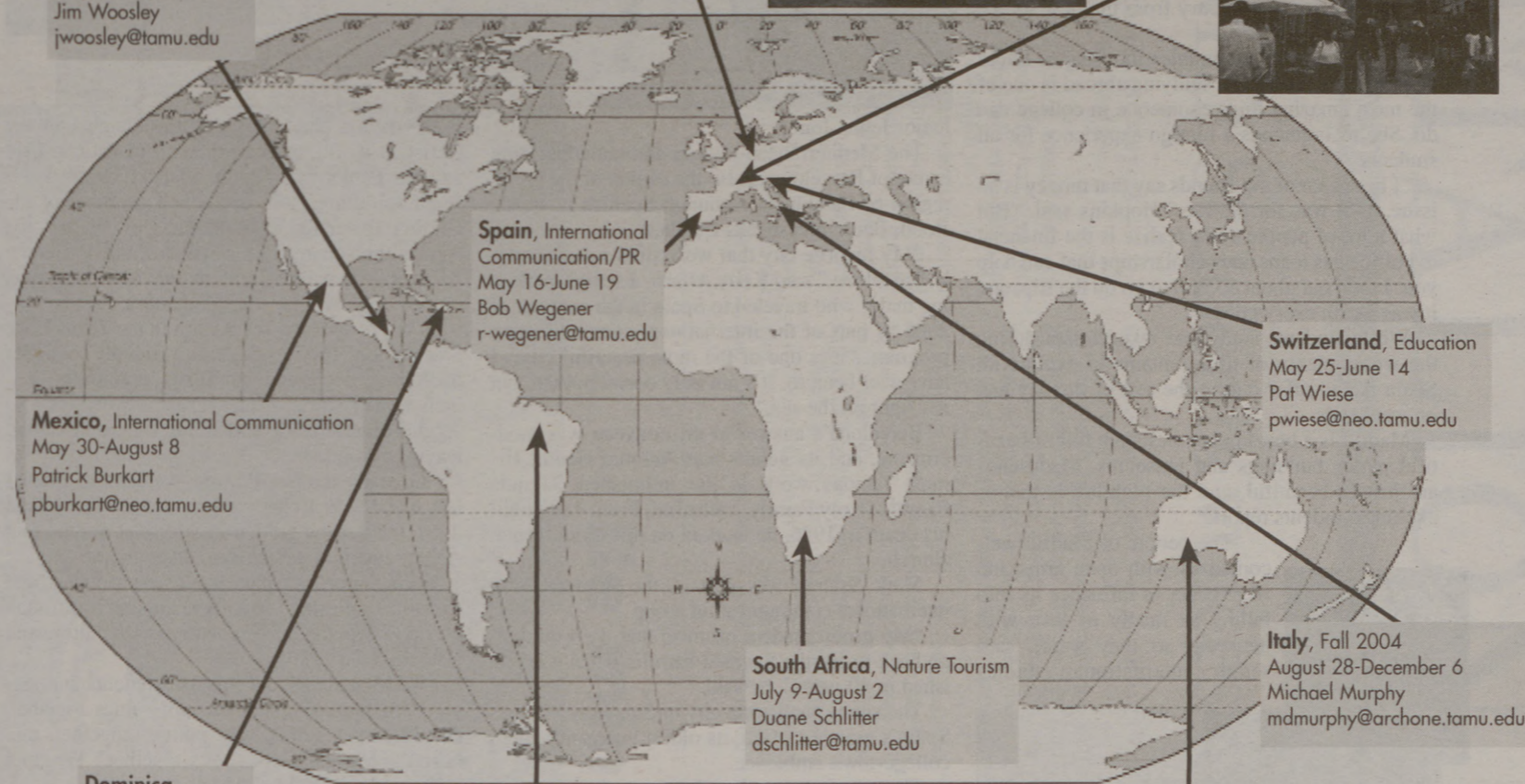
Costa Rica, Education  
May 29-July 3  
Jim Woosley  
[jwoosley@tamu.edu](mailto:jwoosley@tamu.edu)

Germany, VetMed  
July 14-August 20  
Elizabeth Crouch  
[ecrouch@cvm.tamu.edu](mailto:ecrouch@cvm.tamu.edu)

Germany, Arts  
May 30-July 3  
Tom Woodfin  
[woodfin@tamu.edu](mailto:woodfin@tamu.edu)

Germany, Psychology  
May 20-June 28  
Arnold LeUnes  
[Arnold-Leunes@tamu.edu](mailto:Arnold-Leunes@tamu.edu)

France, FESIA  
May 24-June 18  
Lonnie Jones  
[lljones@tamu.edu](mailto:lljones@tamu.edu)



Mexico, International Communication  
May 30-August 8  
Patrick Burkart  
[pburkart@neo.tamu.edu](mailto:pburkart@neo.tamu.edu)

Spain, International Communication/PR  
May 16-June 19  
Bob Wegener  
[r-wegener@tamu.edu](mailto:r-wegener@tamu.edu)

Switzerland, Education  
May 25-June 14  
Pat Wiese  
[pwiese@neo.tamu.edu](mailto:pwiese@neo.tamu.edu)

South Africa, Nature Tourism  
July 9-August 2  
Duane Schlitter  
[dschlitter@tamu.edu](mailto:dschlitter@tamu.edu)

Italy, Fall 2004  
August 28-December 6  
Michael Murphy  
[mdmurphy@archone.tamu.edu](mailto:mdmurphy@archone.tamu.edu)

Dominica  
May 27-June 18  
James Woolley  
[jwoolley@nsf.gov](mailto:jwoolley@nsf.gov)

Brazil, Agriculture  
May 15-June 7  
Ed Runge  
[e-runge@tamu.edu](mailto:e-runge@tamu.edu)

Australia, Political Science  
May 26-July 1  
Norman Luttbeg  
[n-luttbeg@tamu.edu](mailto:n-luttbeg@tamu.edu)

Australia/New Zealand, Psychology (Winterbreak)  
December 19-January 14  
Arnold LeUnes  
[Arnold-Leunes@tamu.edu](mailto:Arnold-Leunes@tamu.edu)