Psychology Goes Global: Summer Study Abroad

This summer, seven students traveled to Cape Town, South Africa, for a three-week study abroad program. Drs. Erin & Reed Mueller accompanied the students who completed two courses: International Service in Psychology and a Peace Psychology Seminar focusing on Apartheid. The students volunteered at a women's shelter and public health clinic where they served the local community. Plus, they enjoyed a variety of cultural activities and natural sites, including Robben Island, District Six Museum, Langa Township, Cape Point, Cape of Good Hope, Boulders Beach Penguin Colony, Table Mountain, and a three-day Garden Route Tour. We asked two of the students, Kaelyn Buettner and Aysia Killingbeck, about the trip:

Studying abroad is a big commitment, what made you willing to spend the time and money?

Kaelyn: I signed up for the program “first and foremost because of the professors leading the trip. I couldn’t have asked for more understanding, helpful and wonderful professors. Secondly, Africa in of itself was never somewhere I had envisioned myself traveling to, so I wanted to challenge myself and put myself into a position of vulnerability - to grow as a person.”

Aysia: “I’ve always wanted to travel abroad and experience different cultures. When I heard about the trip to Cape Town with the psychology department I knew that I had to go on this trip. This far exceeded my expectations and was worth every penny spent.”
Was there an important learning experience that stands out?

Kaelyn: “Learning about Apartheid and Nelson Mandela, included learning of ‘color tests’, seeing where Nelson Mandela came from, and how deeply ingrained Apartheid was into both economic status and standard of living. It was so eye opening to see how the system of Apartheid developed, but also how the country is affected now.”

Aysia: “Though Apartheid has ended, the aftermath was still present within the communities in South Africa today. Physically seeing segregation and hearing first hand stories of what it was like at Robben Island truly impacted me in a way I never thought possible. I have learned that we tend to get comfortable in our little ‘bubbles’ and we do not realize the struggle many individuals go through the freedom others have.”

What was the volunteer experience like?

Kaelyn: “The volunteer experience really challenged both my emotional understanding of myself and my physical understanding. What I mean, is that the stories I heard from the women in the shelter, seeing their children, understanding them and who they were as women, were so incredibly heartbreaking and beautiful. It made me check my privilege, what I had back here in the USA, and how lightly sometimes I took it.”

Aysia: “Volunteering at the Ihata women’s shelter was an incredible experience. I got to hear many stories of hardships and struggles and it was empowering to see the women come together to better themselves. I came into the shelter a complete stranger and left feeling some kind of irreplaceable bond with the women and those running the shelter. It was an experience I will never forget and those women will forever hold a place in my heart. I hope to make it back there some way and create a positive impact on the Ihata shelter and the surrounding communities.”

If you haven’t yet, consider working a study abroad trip into your time at CU. As you consider taking this step, keep in mind that our next Psychology study abroad trip will be Summer, 2020. In previous trips, we studied together in Angers, France, and Dublin, Ireland, and we’re on the search for our next location right now. If you have any question, reach out to either Dr. Erin Mueller or Dr. Reed Mueller for more information or simply to express interest.
Where are They Now?

Abby Schultz (BA, 2018) began studies in the Applied Psychology M.A. program at Pacific University in the fall.

Adrienne Hagen (BA, 2009; MA, 2017) is now the director of the Gender and Sexuality Resource Center at Concordia University. In addition to this role, Adrienne serves as the Equity Compliance Program Manager for the University and as a Disability Support Services Counselor.

An Dang (BA, 2015) is taking a new position as a mental health therapy tech with the state of Oregon. She will be working with children in a group home while also applying for graduate school.

Chris Edward (BA, 2018) is continuing his basketball career in Europe.

Ernesto Vasquez, III (MA, 2018) successfully defended his thesis, entitled *Minority Students in College: Finding Sense of Community*, in August. Continuing to pursue this theme professionally, he was recently hired as the Director of the Diversity Resource Center at Mount Hood Community College.

Madison Galuszka (BA, 2018) now holds a position at a mental health facility in California working as a counselor in charge of six teens struggling with mental illnesses.

Tara Fishback (BA, 2018) began her PhD program in clinical psychology at Palo Alto University this fall.

Tori Muir (BA, 2018) is working for Legacy with a recent promotion from Medical Scribe to Advanced Clinical Associate. She is also taking her pre-requisite courses with plans to apply to the Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner program at OHSU.

Tyler Charlton (BA, 2018) started at Emory law this fall in Atlanta, GA.

Megan Setje (BA, 2018) entered Grand Canyon University this fall studying in a MA in Forensic Psychology program. Megan is also working as an “Early Intervention Habilitation Provider” which involves carrying out treatment plans for children on the Austin’s Spectrum in their own homes.

Three of our April, 2018 BA graduates, and one 2018 graduate with a minor in psychology, are presently in enrolled in the MA in Community Psychology program: Cecilia Magistrale (minor), Christa McCutchen, Gerhett Moser, and Jennifer Fletcher.

If you are interested in this program, please contact Dr. Bryant Carlson.

We love to hear what you are up to! Keep in touch.
Psi Chi Fall Psychology Major/Minor Mixer

On October 24th, Our Psi Chi Honor Society, along with Student Affairs, hosted a large group of students and faculty at our Psychology Fall Mixer.

The event included pizza, games, and a presentation on study abroad opportunities in the psychology department. We ended with a panel discussion which included:

Brendan Dennard, who has been with the FBI for 8 years working in the gang enforcement unit. He is currently a student in our MA in Psychology: Community Psychology program.

Hannah Smith, 2016 BA graduate. Hannah is in her second year of a PsyD program at Pacific University and is already seeing clients in the clinic.

Courtney May Craft (2012 BA Graduate) is a school counselor at Reynolds High School working with freshman at a very diverse school.

Our guests answered questions and described their job duties. They also gave advice on graduate school, taking the GRE, paying attention to their own mental health while helping others, and much more.

Internship Students Serving Together

Each year Dr. Jane Smith gathers our internship students as they serve the greater community. This month they packed food for school children through the Portland Backpacks project.