

Dartmouth Alumni & Students for Honduras

Newsletter April 2016

Dartmouth Alumni & Students for Honduras just completed its eighth successful year of the Fuerza para el Futuro (“Force for the Future”) leadership development camp in El Rosario, Honduras! This year, a group of 6 Dartmouth students and alumni traveled together to El Rosario to run the camp, which brings the youth of the community together to learn the spirit of volunteerism and the skills needed to become strong leaders. During the week-long camp, we work with new and veteran Fuerza students in both classroom and hands-on community service settings. In the classroom, students learn skills such as letter writing, interviewing and public speaking. They later implement those skills to head up development projects in their community and neighboring communities.



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The Dartmouth team worked hard during the six months leading up to the trip to plan curriculum and fundraise the cost of the trip. We spent a lot of time working together and getting to know each other well, which helped us hit the ground running from the second our plane landed in San Pedro Sula.

Every team member brought different skills and perspectives, as well as a unique personality. We had a great team dynamic which helped us accomplish a lot during our time in El Rosario.



Our first day in El Rosario

Dental Education

Again this year we focused on dental education, as our partner organization, ACTS, has recently built a new dental clinic in the community. We held dental hygiene education workshops in six different villages, with our Fuerza students leading talks and demonstrations. Each attendee received a toothbrush, toothpaste and floss. While some communities were familiar with basic dental hygiene because we had reached out to them during last year's Fuerza program, we increased our outreach further this year to more impoverished villages in the region. We highlighted our visits to a couple of the villages below.



Michael with Henry, Miguel, Mauricio and Angel, a group of Fuerza boys who led demonstrations on how best to clean teeth

Los Orreros

Los Orreros is a small village of 13 families, located about an hour drive from El Rosario. The people of Los Orreros are indigenous and live on the land of their tribe's chief. In exchange for land to live on, adults and children alike must make and transport charcoal. Making charcoal is extremely difficult work and hazardous for their health. Any money they are able to take home after paying the chief goes towards food. Their clothes and soap are donated by ACTS. Due to the high degree of poverty in the community, most children had never used a toothbrush before. This was apparent as the children did not know how to hold the brush or where to put the toothpaste. Our Fuerza students spoke with each family about the importance of dental hygiene and taught each adult and child the basics of cleaning teeth. Each left with his/her own brush and paste and knowledge of basic dental care. Our Fuerza students left with a new perspective as this was their first visit to this village. They requested that next year we return to do a day camp for children in Los Orreros as part of the Fuerza program.



Left: Sixth year Fuerza student, Roxana, brushing the teeth of a young girl in Los Orreros



Above: A 12-year old girl in Los Orreros cleaning her teeth for the first time!



Left: A group of girls with their new toothbrushes

El Convento

The Fuerza students also held a dental workshop in the nearby village of El Convento. A number of our students live in El Convento and were able to attract a large number of enthusiastic attendees from their community. Students had a blast running the workshop. When a group of adult men came by but hesitated to join the workshop, girls from the Fuerza ran over to them and pulled them inside the school to present to them. When the men began to joke around, the girls decided to quiz them on dental hygiene facts. They did not let the men leave until each passed an oral exam of five questions. As each passed, the whole room erupted in cheers. The Fuerza students also engaged young children by putting on a funny skit that taught them the correct way to clean their teeth. Five Fuerza students stood in a row as teeth while another student used a long broom to brush them. The children each had a chance to come to the front of the class and clean the human teeth with the broom. The workshop in El Convento allowed the Fuerza students to use their creativity and enthusiasm to create memorable educational moments for the whole community.



A group of Fuerza girls presenting to men from El Convento. Each man had to pass a 5 question oral exam before the girls let him leave



A group of Fuerza students after a successful dental workshop in El Convento

Curriculum

The Fuerza curriculum has traditionally aimed to teach students skills to become effective leaders in their communities and to provide opportunities to implement and practice those skills. The education model in Honduras is very much based on a culture of copying and memorization. Students are rarely encouraged to think critically to solve problems or incorporate creative thinking. Dartmouth students worked hard in the months prior to the trip to develop engaging curriculum for the Fuerza students.

Dom & Benny's group dedicated time to working on students' verbal and visual communication skills. Students presented impromptu speeches and critiqued each other's presentations to refine their ability to effectively speak on a topic in front of a large group. Students also learned how to make informative and effective posters that advertised the importance of reading as a family and caring for library books. Later in the week, students learned the value of teamwork and effective leadership skills as they ran dental workshops in various communities. By the final day, the students were able to run the workshops on their own with very little assistance from their teachers. The week concluded with a performance of a song with verses in both English and Spanish that the group had practiced throughout the week. While students learned the value of practicing independently, they also gained an understanding of the importance of collaboration and coordination in effective leadership.



which is now kept in the El Rosario library. Another highlight was the students'

Michael & Allyson led a group of the youngest Fuerza students. The first day of curriculum centered on personal health. Students learned how to care for their teeth and created skits and posters to summarize what they had learned. Students also had group discussions around the elements of a healthy relationship between friends and family. They had their first creative writing experience, crafting their own original stories and presenting them at the Graduation Ceremony. The stories were compiled into a book,

participation in a “Build-a-School” activity. Together, they created and presented an ideal school that expressed their values and aspirations. Their model included rules about respect and kindness as well as the addition of more classrooms for each grade and elective classes like art and dance. The curriculum aimed to encourage younger students to practice healthy living habits and grow their imaginations.

Angie worked with a Honduran native, Jessica, to lead curriculum for the oldest Fuerza students. In addition to dental education, the group focused on developing their public speaking and presentation skills. Students gave improvised speeches, compiled skits and prepared educational talks for families on subjects like reading and public health. Angie also taught an elective dance class with a group of students performing the final dance at the Graduation Ceremony.



Construction

Carizalito School

Every year, we incorporate construction projects into the Fuerza curriculum. This year, the students hiked for an hour up a mountain to the community of Carizalito. Due to its location and limited accessibility, Carizalito is always in desperate need of additional resources. The school was in desperate need of a paint job and the Fuerza students rose to the occasion. They spent a day helping their neighbors by painting the walls of the school and all of the furniture. After painting, they held another dental jornada, distributing toothbrushes and educational material to each family.



Dental Stations

In the theme of dental education, the Fuerza students created dental stations to hang in each school in the region. Each board was equipped with nails to hang toothbrushes and decorations that included facts about dental hygiene. Teachers will incorporate dental care into the school day to ensure students are cleaning their teeth regularly.



Fuerza students proud of the dental stations they created for each school in the region



The Fuerza program has become such an integral part of the community as it prepares the young adults to take on leadership roles and continue to develop their region. Year after year we have seen how our students have grown and we are excited to continue to work with them for many years to come. Thank you for your generous support of the Fuerza program and Dartmouth Alumni & Students for Honduras.

Warmest regards,

Juliana Ortego '13, *DASH Chair, ACTS Steering Committee Member*

Angie Lee '17, *DASH Co-Trip Leader*

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DASH Team Members

