

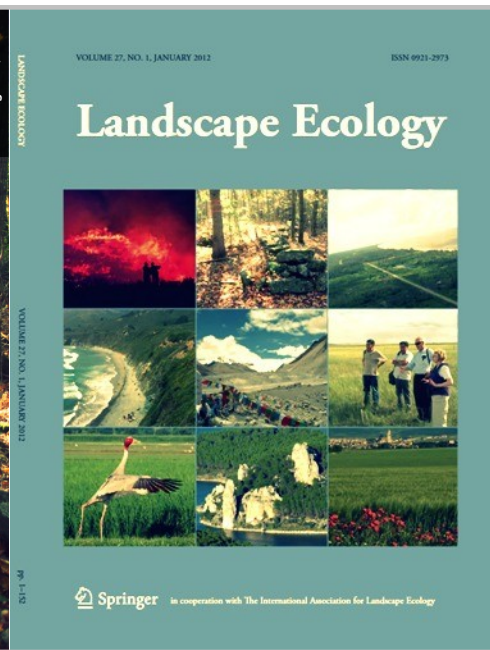
# geography news

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHY AT CLARK UNIVERSITY



WHERE'S YOUR WORLD? JANUARY, 2012

# Geography



« cover photo of Mongolian camels by Jody Emel

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STUDY ABROAD

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Questions or comments about the newsletter?  
Email Katherine Rugg at [krugg@clarku.edu](mailto:krugg@clarku.edu)

find us





« Colleen at “Queen’s Bath”  
in Kauai, Hawaii

# hello!

## please welcome the geography department’s newest staff member: colleen dolan

Colleen Dolan is our newest staff member in Psychology. Colleen is excited about meeting Geography. Born and raised in Worcester, new people, about getting to know the Colleen is no stranger to Clark. Her Geography program, and about being grandmother/mentor was a Clarkie many constantly surrounded by a thriving years ago, and ever since childhood, Colleen community of scholars. She is a self-described knew she wanted to be a part of Clark in some “people person” and is eager to work with the capacity. In addition to working here, Colleen diverse community of geography, as well as of is also a student, pursuing a degree through Clark. If you happen to be on campus, feel free COPACE in Communications with a minor in to stop by the main office and say, “Hello!”

## milestones & updates

### graduate student grants and awards during the fall semester:

**Bill Kutz** was awarded \$4,200 by the American Institute for Maghrib Studies for proposed research in North Africa, entitled, “Spanish-led urban development in Tangier, Morocco: A sustainable practice?” His study will take place Summer 2012.

The Marsh Institute awarded four Geller Awards this semester to:

- **Mireya Bravo**
- **Kelly Kay**
- **Seth Schindler**
- **Lisa Stoddard**

### other news:

Undergraduate geography major

**Nick Rossi** (‘12) won gold and bronze medals in the Redistricting Olympics, a contest that asks citizens to create their own redistricting maps. Rossi’s work won gold in the Congressional Map category and also landed a bronze medal in the House Map contest. [Read more in the Clark News Hub.](#)

Assistant Professor **Karen Frey** contributed to the 2011 Arctic Report Card’s collection of scientific essays, and participated on a panel of three distinguished researchers. The panel presented a live webinar and a Q&A session with reporters from the *Associated Press*, *Reuters*, *ClimateWire*, and others. [Read more in the Clark News Hub.](#)

Flamenco dancer and Economic Geographer, Professor **Yuko Aoyama**, was highlighted in The Office of Intercultural Affairs’ series entitled “Her Story.” On December 1st, 2011, she joined OIA and RHA to share how she became interested in Flamenco dance, how she went from being a student to a college professor and how she decided Geography is her passion.

The **2012 Clark AAG Party** will take place at 7:00pm on Sunday, February 26<sup>th</sup> at Bar Nine NYC. The venue is located at 807 Ninth Avenue in Hell’s Kitchen (less than a ten minute walk from the hotels.) Please see the event flyer or email [krugg@clarku.edu](mailto:krugg@clarku.edu) for more information.



## GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Geography Ph.D. student, Jill Williams, tells us about her current research in southern Arizona.

**[jill williams]**

### » What does your research involve?

My research broadly examines humanitarian efforts aimed at reducing migrant deaths in southern Arizona. Since the early 1990s, US border enforcement policies have pushed migrants to cross through more and more remote and dangerous mountain and desert regions. In turn, there has been an exponential increase in migrant deaths in southern Arizona. Every year the remains of hundred of migrants are recovered and countless others remain missing. In response to this tragedy, both state agencies and non-governmental organizations have developed various programs aimed at mitigating migrant deaths. These efforts take a number of different forms including public service announcements aired in Mexico and Central America warning migrants of the dangers of crossing, the patrolling of migrant trails with food, water, and medical aid for those in need, the distribution of dehydration prevention kits to migrants before attempted crossings, and the development of specifically trained search and rescue teams. Through my work with humanitarian organizations in southern Arizona and time spent talking with state officials and human rights activists it became clear to me that gendered beliefs and the gender of migrants in need influences the development and implementation of these efforts. So, my research specifically focuses on the gendered dimensions of these programs, examining how gendered beliefs (e.g., inherent female vulnerability) and discourses (e.g., human trafficking) have influenced the development of the initiatives and how the gender of migrants in need shapes the implementation of search and rescue efforts. In order to understand this, I spend a lot of time working with and observing different organizations that engage in humanitarian work in various capacities, interview organizational members, filing Freedom of Information Act requests to obtain

information from the US Border Patrol about initiatives, and reviewing policy documents and congressional hearing transcripts to see how initiatives have developed over time and what has influenced this process.

### » How did you become interested in immigration policy & reform?

I first became interested in issues of border enforcement while completing my MA in Women's and Gender Studies. My master's research examined the gendered dimensions of post-9/11 border enforcement discourse, specifically looking at how discourses of violence against undocumented women were being used to justify border enforcement policies. This work compelled me to begin spending time out in Arizona in the summers working with human rights and humanitarian organizations. This allowed me to see how border enforcement policies were actually put into practices and what that meant for migrants crossing through the desert. While I had been aware of the work of non-governmental humanitarian organizations, it was during this time that I started to become aware of efforts by other groups to reduce migrant deaths and how these different programs were being framed and implemented. I initially intended to focus my research on humanitarian efforts by the US Border Patrol. However, due to difficulties accessing the Border Patrol, my research has expanded to also look at the work of both pro- and anti-border enforcement organizations.

### » What would you like to accomplish with your research?

I think that it's very important to think critically about humanitarian interventions. Rather than seeing efforts to reduce migrant deaths as apolitical, I would like my research to draw attention to the political motivations that influence when, how, and why humanitarian interventions are developed and implemented and when they aren't. In doing so, I hope to illustrate how humanitarian efforts, though seemingly good intentioned, can actually reproduce hierarchical power relations and inequalities. This is not to say that we



should not engage in humanitarian efforts, but rather that we should do so with a critical eye so that we can be aware of unintentional consequences when they occur. I also think that it is very important to problematize the connection between humanitarianism and militarization. The way in which the US Border Patrol and civilian border enforcement organizations increasingly point to their humanitarian efforts to justify their militarized activity fails to acknowledge that it is border militarization that has created the human rights crises at the border that now must be mitigated. In drawing attention to these issues, I hope that my research can provide tools for activists, policy makers, and academics to challenge border enforcement policies that increase death and violence.

### » Have you experienced any difficulties with your research, due to the current political climate of Arizona?

There have been many expected and unexpected difficulties along the way. I have been in negotiations with the US Border Patrol since May of 2010 with the hopes of interviewing representatives or agents of the agency. While I am supposed to be able to talk to someone in the next month or so, in the meantime I have had to file a series of Freedom of Information Act requests to get basic information about Border Patrol humanitarian efforts. The somewhat unexpected difficulty of obtaining any information from the Border Patrol has definitely been a challenge that has spurred new research directions. For example, instead of just focusing on state-based humanitarian efforts as I initially intended, I have expanded my research to include the humanitarian work of non-governmental organizations. I actually think that the political climate of Arizona has been beneficial for my research. People in southern Arizona are incredibly politically active and, in my experience, rather open to talking about their beliefs and experiences. There's always a new controversy out here as legislation is passed or put on hold so there's always something to talk about.

### » What are some of the most memorable experiences you've had so far?

My research constantly surprises me. I have had countless fascinating conversations with people in their homes or walking through the desert. People's willingness to open up to me and share their experiences and perspectives on border issues has been pretty amazing. I am constantly challenged to recognize how intensely complex border issues and people's beliefs around them are. Spending time in southern Arizona talking to a wide variety of people with drastically different perspectives and political positions has disrupted any simplistic notions I had of why people engage in the work they do or have the beliefs they have. For example, I had a conversation one day with a member of the Arizona Border Defenders (a volunteer border enforcement organization) in which the man I was talking to gave me a rather persuasive argument in favor of open borders for economic migrants. He proceeded to tell me that the reason he worked with the Border Defenders was because he wanted to stop people from dying in the desert, not because he believed we should have a totally closed off border. This is just one example of the ways in which my presuppositions are constantly challenged as people share with me the complicated reasons they do the work they do.

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# the real world... geography.

## SABBATICALS

This past semester, several faculty members of The Graduate School of Geography were on sabbatical. We caught up with them and heard about some of their exciting pursuits and activities...

Professor Jody Emel



During the fall, Professor Jody Emel took a trip to Mongolia to look at “mining and herding and their interaction.” She worked with Lauren Bonilla, a Clark University geography student who is doing her Ph.D research there. Photos 1 and 2, along with the cover photo, were taken from her research in Mongolia.

Professor Robert (Gil) Pontius



Professor Gil Pontius travelled to Namibia, where he taught a land change modeling workshop. Photo 3 on the next page shows Professor Pontius with the daughters of Kisco Sinvula, who is a Clark GISDE

graduate and a leader in GIS in Namibia.

In September, Pontius travelled to the Netherlands. He was the guest speaker at The University of Twente's traditional Schermerhorn Lecture. [Read ITC's article for more information about the talk.](#)

He also taught a two-day land change modeling workshop in Morelia, Mexico. Photo 4 on the next page shows Gil, along with several students, at the “graduation” that took place at the end of the workshop.

At the beginning of January, Professor Pontius travelled to China, in order to establish a collaboration between Shandong University and Clark University.

Gil also had fun during his busy sabbatical, and can be seen in Photo 5 on the next page performing an act with his son, Nicholas, and his daughter, Olivia, at “First Night” on New Year's Eve in Worcester, MA.

Assistant Professor Chris Williams



During the fall, Professor Christopher Williams moved to Lausanne, Switzerland

where he was hosted as a Visiting Professor at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology within the research group of Prof. Marc Parlange, Dean of the School of Civil, Environmental, and Architectural Engineering. While there, Chris collaborated on new research characterizing the ecohydrology and water resource dynamics of a watershed in eastern Burkina Faso. He also expanded various international partnerships through visits to labs in Jena, Germany (*Max Planck Institute for Biogeochemistry*), Gif sur Yvette, France (*le Laboratoire des Sciences du Climat et l'Environnement*), and Zurich, Switzerland (*Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule – Zürich*).

Professor Williams was asked to join the international carbon cycle research community undertaking the most ambitious effort ever to provide detailed regional understanding of the global carbon budget: the Regional Carbon Cycle Assessment and Processes initiative (RECCAP). The primary goals are (1) to provide higher spatial resolution to analyses of the global carbon balance with the aim of improving the quantification and understanding of its drivers, and (2) to improve capacity for quantifying and monitoring the evolution of carbon fluxes at a regional to national level. By assembling and comparing direct observations, model results,

and atmospheric inversions, RECCAP is establishing the most comprehensive and detailed carbon budgets ever produced for ten land and four ocean regions all using a common framework. Professor Williams is leading one of five high-level syntheses seeking to explain the importance of different processes contributing to each region's carbon balance. Some of the processes being examined are enhanced plant growth from fertilization by elevated carbon dioxide and nitrogen, ozone inhibition of plant growth, effects of changes in sunlight quality and quantity, forest harvest and deforestation, and the changing climate (warming/cooling, wetting/drying).

Attribution is critically important because the future evolution of regional fluxes as well as the potential for carbon management as a climate mitigation option both depend on which mechanisms are contributing to the unexplained net carbon uptake taking place today.

Such a detailed and comprehensive attribution of the present day carbon balance has never before been attempted at a regional scale, or even globally. With its interdisciplinary approach to using a wide range of information sources, the project is expected to build confidence in regional knowledge of carbon sources and sinks and reveal inconsistencies to guide the research agenda for the next decade.



# PHOTOalbum



Photo No. 1

Lauren Bonilla (left) and Robert Galloway, a Peace Corps worker (center) at the Ukhuaa Khudag coal mine in Tsogttsetsii district, South Gobi province in Mongolia.



Photo No. 2

Jody (left) with Lauren (right) in Mongolia.



Photo No. 4

Gil in Mexico, after teaching a land change modeling workshop



Photo No. 5

Gil with his daughter (Olivia) and his son (Nicholas) performing at First Night on New Years Eve

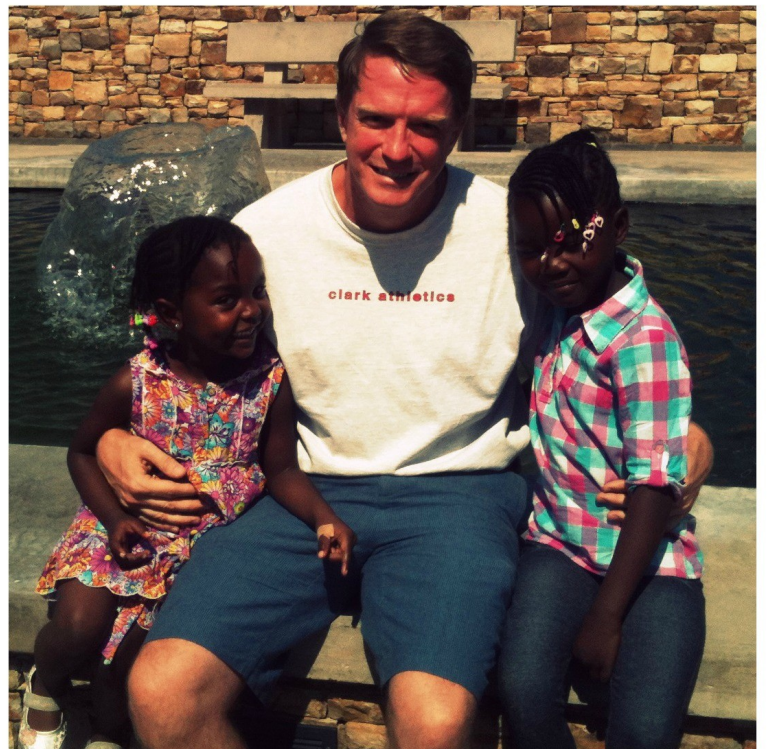


Photo No. 3

Gil with the daughters of Kisco Sinvula, a leader in GIS in Namibia.



## RECAP:

This year's annual Wallace W. Atwood lecture series was held on Thursday & Friday, 13-14, October 2011. The department welcomed Karen Seto as the 2011 speaker. Karen is an Associate Professor in the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies at Yale University. She received her doctorate in Geography from Boston University. Karen delivered the Atwood lecture to a packed Razzo Hall on Thursday evening. The talk was entitled "Urbanization trends in China: challenges and opportunities for environmental sustainability". The talk revealed some of the globally significant urban changes occurring in China and explored the mechanisms by which such rapidly occurring development might help secure an environmentally sustainable future. A reception followed the talk, offering the opportunity for alumni and friends to interact with Karen. With an extensive expertise on cities, climate change, policy-making and China (to mention just a few things!), Karen has a full evening engaging with students, faculty, trustees and community members. Karen commented on the overwhelmingly positive impression that both our undergraduate and graduate student had made. Interactions with students and faculty continued into Friday. In addition to a early-morning question and answer session with Geography graduate students, Karen featured on a research panel discussing "Land-use science and environmental sustainability: future directions and applications". Joined by Gil Pontius (Geography), John Rogan (Geography) and Florencia Sangermano (Clark Labs), the panel stimulating an engaging discussion with and between audience members.

## ATWOOD 2011 karen seto



Thank you all who came out to the events and made our visitor so welcome. Special thanks go to those undergraduate and graduate students who left such a great impression of the intellectual community we have at Clark. Extra special thanks to Katie Shepard, Katherine Rugg, Brenda Nikas-Hayes and Jean Heffernan for all the work they put in to making the various parts of the Atwood event run so smoothly.

The department has a full schedule of guest speakers throughout 2012. In addition, we will hold the Clark Geography AAG Party in New York City on Sunday 26th February 2012. So please be sure to keep checking our website for all the details.

**Assistant Professor Mark Davidson**  
**Chair of the Atwood Committee 2011-2012**



# CRITICAL GEOGRAPHY

From November 4th to 6th the GSG hosted the 18th Annual Critical Geography Conference. The conference was jointly sponsored and financed by the GSG and the journal *Human Geography* (also a Clark-affiliated venture), and it was organized and managed by geography graduate students.

The theme of the conference was “Constructing a radical politics in an age of crisis” and the keynote events were organized around that topic. On Friday afternoon a graduate student speaker series event featured Melissa Wright, Professor of Women's Studies and Geography at Penn State University. This talk was co-sponsored by the conference committee and coordinated to be an event that conference attendees arriving early could attend. On Friday evening the conference commenced with a keynote address by Neil Smith, Distinguished Professor of Anthropology and Geography at CUNY. Dr. Smith examined ‘Neoliberalism Occupied’, speaking to the potential for links between radical geography scholarship and progressive social movements. Over Saturday and Sunday, the conference featured 25 research paper and

panel sessions. On Saturday, the activist and politician Tom Hayden delivered a special address on ‘War Everlasting’, sponsored by *Human Geography*. Saturday's program finished with a plenary panel speaking to the conference theme, and featuring four speakers: Vinay Gidwani, Associate Professor of Geography at the University of Minnesota, Dianne Rocheleau, Professor of Geography at Clark University, Joel Wainwright, Associate Professor of Geography at the Ohio State University, and Melissa Wright.

The conference was well attended: 121 people were listed on the program, but many others came to participate and observe. Approximately 110 people attended the Friday afternoon speaker series talk, 150 people attended the keynote address, 100 people for Tom Hayden's lecture, and 120 people for the plenary panel. The Saturday and Sunday research and panel sessions were consistently well attended, with audiences ranging from 10 to 40 people per session. Clark undergraduate students participated in many of these events, and faculty and graduate student from across the university presented. Numerous participants

told us that the conference was intellectually stimulating and productive, and that this was either one of or the best Critical Geography conferences they had attended. The conference was also discussed, along with our sponsoring journal *Human Geography*, in *Times Higher Education*.

A special thanks are due to the GSG and *Human Geography*. their generous financial support allowed us to expand the events schedule and number of invited speakers. The GSG staff were also exceedingly patient and generous with their time, and provided much-needed logistical support.

The 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Critical Geography Conference will be held in early November 2012 at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Please join us in supporting the critical geography community there next year!

**John Lauermann  
and Miles Kenney-Lazar  
Ph.D. Candidates  
Graduate School of Geography  
Clark University**

» [criticalgeography.org](http://criticalgeography.org)





» You were recently elected Co-President of the Clark University Geography Association (CUGA) after being an active member of the group for several years. What sort of activities did you host/participate in with CUGA during your first semester as a CUGA Leader?

» I worked with CUGA on various events such as Trivia Night and Occupy Clark talks. We've worked extensively on a budget proposal on behalf of CUGA and the Geography Undergraduate Dept. for a spring semester speaker. I attended conferences and meetings for the Geog. Dept, and often talked with students from the Geography Department's Grad Dept.

» How did you become interested in studying Geography?

» The many options of this discipline really appealed to me. I could go off on many paths with the classes I've taken and the track I've selected, especially since I'm interested in the social and cultural aspects of Geography.

» You're a very busy person! When you have time for them, what are some of your extracurricular activities?

» Well, CUGA meetings and events are one of my extracurricular activities, but I try to attend as many cultural events on campus as possible. This semester has been insane that I've seriously lacking time to just chill.

» You just recently completed your capstone in Professor Yuko Aoyama's Internet Geography class. Can you speak a little to that experience?

» I really enjoyed that class and am really proud of my capstone. I picked a topic, right from the start, and started researching. The range of topics other students chose were truly diverse. People had topics ranging from blogs to pornography to social media. Once I got into the discussion flow of the class, it was easier to contribute. I think Dr. Aoyama is an excellent professor, and I really enjoy her lectures. But as a fair warning, the class is reading intensive, in order that everyone contributes to the discussion... so be prepared.

» You were the only undergrad who participated in a Clark University Geographical Society (CUGS) meeting with the Atwood lecturer Karen Seto this past fall. What was that experience like?

» Slightly intimidating, since I realized after the fact that I was the only undergraduate there! But also very enriching to listen to Karen Seto speak more informally and talk about her career path and history.

» You're attending the AAG Annual Meeting in New York City this February. What are your expectations for the event?

» Another enriching experience! I would like to soak up as many topics and issues addressing Geographers today. I'll also be on the lookout for a guest speaker for a spring semester CUGA event. I have no idea what to expect since it will be my first time attending. I will be keeping my eyes open to put it mildly.

» What are your plans for after graduation?

» Never ask a graduating senior that question! I think I would like to work in government related to foreign service.



# photos from the field



« Undergraduate Students from **John Rogan's** Landscape Ecology class at the Harvard Research Forest in October, 2011.

[from left] Cassandra Volatile-Wood, A. J. Shatz, Tom Hurlburt, Emily Sturdivant, Corinne Cahill, Kristen Cullity, Melanie Vanderhoof, Kangping Si.



« Students from **Dianne Rocheleau's** Global and Local Environmental Justice class at Todd Ecological Inc. in October, 2011.

[from left] Ariel Maiorano, Sarah Schwartz and Erin Glennie.

## BEHIND THE SCENES: student workers

The Graduate School of Geography at Clark University consists of a diverse community of faculty, staff, and students. Our student workers are an important part of this community, as they assist us in daily tasks and projects that are integral to the program's ability to run smoothly. In this issue, we're hearing from Molly Cooksy ('12), who just recently returned from her study abroad program in the Dominican Republic...

"Returning to winter in New England, after spending the fall semester in Santiago, Dominican Republic, has been a shock to the system to say the least. The starkest contrasts have been the differences in language, climate, and schedule. While in Santiago, I lived with a host family who only spoke to me in Spanish, took classes in Spanish at a university, la Pontificia Universidad Catolica Madre y Maestra, and worked with a public health program, Juan XXIII, in the local barrio of Los Prados, again, speaking only in Spanish.

My study abroad program, run by CIEE (the Council on International Educational Exchange), is designed around a service learning model. This means that in addition to studying at a university, my fellow students and I were assigned to work and develop a tangible project and research topic with different local human service organizations. We took classes designed around the service learning model and community participation until lunch, ate with our host families, and then went to our communities to work before returning home to finish course work.

The multi-faceted structure of the program was unique and demanding. I lived a pleasant neighborhood with a host mother and her two older daughters within walking distance of the university. From eight in the morning until noon, we took classes in Poverty and Development, Spanish, Research Methods, Community Participation, and Capstone. After a hefty Dominican meal, most of us headed directly for our community work. As the semester progressed, our projects did as well, often requiring more and more time commitment. My own work with Juan XXIII involved community work in Los Prados. Los Prados is a marginalized neighborhood in the south zone of Santiago, which was constructed in 1996, and is home to around 2,000 people. The community faces a variety of obstacles, including accessibility to clean water, consistent electricity, employment, health assistance, and nutritious food. As a result, health problems such as diabetes, hypertension, and asthma develop easily.

My job was to work with volunteer health promoters and continue a nutrition club started the previous semester by a George Washington University student, Kendra O'Connor. The club provides information about nutritious foods, important vitamins and

minerals, disease prevention through diet, and other relevant topics to parents of young children. Meetings are held in the local chapel twice a month, involving the parents in group discussions and providing coloring activities around the same information for the children. The children are weighed and measured by a doctor from Juan XXIII and the supervisor of the health promoters. Sometimes, when available, vitamins are provided for the children who are particularly underweight.

In addition to working with the club and running the discussions, I worked in the community with a couple of the health promoters, Margarita and Cristina, visiting patients and collecting data. Some days we would hold small discussions in someone's home about important topics concerning the community; topics such as AIDS/HIV, tuberculosis, hypertension, etc. Other days I spent on a front porch, drinking coffee and talking with my colleagues and their friends. The most important work was building strong relationships within the community (especially parents involved in the club), and understanding the general level of comprehension regarding healthy habits and disease prevention.

The design of the service learning, the mixture of work and exciting excursions all over the country, is special. It has opened my eyes to a new culture, new ideas, and new approaches to International Development and Social Change. Despite facing such high odds, I found the community of Los Prados to be exceptionally resilient and determined, and received a far more valuable education from my service work there than I could have imagined. My work with them will hopefully continue with other students from CIEE, and eventually open up more doors to increased information and accessibility to health assistance. Juan XXIII, like many public health organizations all over the world, struggles with treating great need with limited resources. However, with increased international awareness (with programs like this one) and community collaboration, one can always hope, and should always believe, that positive change is possible."



photo courtesy of Molly Cooksy (back / center)



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