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My time spent in Ghana was time spent well. Although this was not my idea of a conventional summer, the experiences that I gained in the small village of Putubiw have changed my outlook on life and my perspective of myself. It was surprising the many things that I learned about myself during my time as a teacher and clinician.

After leaving the airport and meeting my in-country coordinator, I was a little apprehensive about the teaching job that was entrusted to me. I knew that I had no teaching experience and had no aspirations to become a teacher; I was learning to become a doctor! However, I accepted the job that was offered to me and began teaching English at the local junior high school. My time at the junior high school was interesting because the school in Putubiw was very different from those of America. The school itself was a three room building that lacked electricity, fans, and even locks. The school building was equipped with the bare necessities – desks for the students and a chalkboard for the teacher. During my time as a teacher, I taught the students basic grammar, new vocabulary words, and spelling through dictations. Although many of the children seemed not to care for learning, there were a few students who took to their education earnestly and I feel accomplished knowing that I helped the few students in my classroom that wished to learn and transcend their current situation by pursuing higher education.

Since I arrived in mid June, I was only able to teach for 4 weeks before the students' term ended for the summer. Thus, I took up another job in the village as a volunteer in the local clinic. My experience working in the clinic was unlike any experience I had had back in the United States. In this small clinic, I was allowed to consult with the patients and prescribe treatments for the ailments. I saw illnesses ranging from malaria and respiratory tract infections to infected

wounds. Under the supervision of nurses, I gained valuable clinical experience that I would have been unable to gain back in the U.S. I especially valued this experience because I am a pre-med major; gaining this kind of hands on experience helped me confirm my wish to become a doctor.

For both of my jobs, as a teacher and clinician, I began work at eight in the morning and ended work at one in the afternoon - this left me with entire afternoons all to myself. During these afternoons, I spent many hours reading books that I purchased from Cape Coast or had conversations with my host brothers and sisters. The topics of conversation were mostly about life in America and comparing life in America and Ghana. Furthermore, I was fortunate because my host family had South African cable television, I so I was able to watch the occasional American show and keep up with the news. Although my host family had cable television, they did not have any access to the Internet. As a result, I had to charter a 45 minute taxi into Cape Coast in order to use the internet at the internet café.

One of the best experiences I gained from my internship in Ghana was traveling around the country to see the various regions and visiting the markets in the different regions. Traveling gave me a fuller picture of Ghana and enriched my view of the country. From the savannahs of the north, the mountains of the east and the beaches of the west and south, traveling opened my eyes to how different Ghanaian culture is from the culture of America; rather than only having the experiences of a tiny village in the central region I am able to associate the identity of Ghana with the many subcultures that exist within Ghana such as the Ashanti, Ewe, and Fante.

I believe that my work with United Planet in Putubiw has allowed junior high school students to gain a better understanding of English and American culture. Furthermore, my presence showed not just the students but all of the villagers that a larger world exists beyond the

limits of the village and even Ghana. Since many of the people in Ghana are poor, they rarely travel beyond their local village or region.

My internship with United Planet has benefitted me greatly because I gained exposure to a culture that is completely different from that of my own. Living in an environment where clean water and electricity are luxuries has made me realize how lucky I am to have lived in such a developed country. Up until now, I have taken for granted things like electricity, clean water, hot water, decent food, and flushing toilets; I thought of these things as basic necessities but this is not the case in different parts of the world. After adapting to life with these commodities, I felt what it was really like to be part of the poor and neglected. I hope to utilize my experiences to continue working for the neglected and marginalized.

In conclusion, this internship was a valuable and unique experience that broadened my perspective of the global community. Although I worked in a school and a clinic, volunteers are given a lot of elbow room to develop any programs that they want to pursue. Some valuable assets that future applicants will require are patience, openness, friendliness, and creativity. I would highly recommend this program in Ghana with United Planet to future Notre Dame applicants.