



Summer 2015

Appalachia Remote Area Medical



Summer 2015 ten students from Methodist College traveled to Cleveland, TN to work with the volunteer Remote Area Medical (RAM) clinic.

The following slides offer pictures and blog excerpts recapping this rich travel course experience.

Lisa Preston and Julie Mattingly
Methodist College
Nursing Faculty



A good time was had by all.....

...this travel course enabled students to experience professional nursing in a different way....

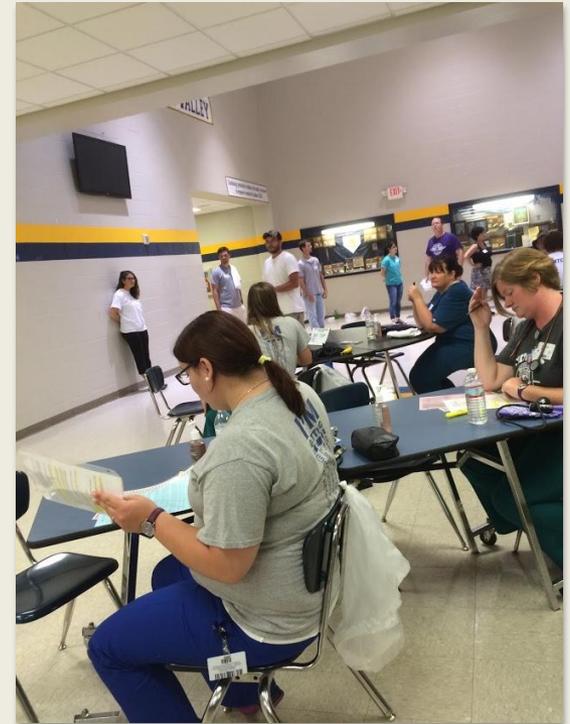


Amy



Amy's Blog Post

- “While in Tennessee, we were able to get a taste of what life is like for the people in the region. On Saturday afternoon, some of us went white water rafting. While rafting, our guide told us that he had previously lived in Elgin, Illinois but moved back to Tennessee. He said, “**I need my mountains. I missed my mountains.**” This is something that played in my head off and on for the remainder of our trip. The Appalachians are home to many and one thing I have had heard over and over from people who live there or used to live there is the love of the mountains. We often associate certain landmarks with our home. And when we leave our home, there is **always something that calls us back or something we miss while we are gone.** I have lived in other states and chose to return to Illinois to be close to my family. When I have been away from home, what I miss is the cozy feel of my little town. I love driving into town on the interstate and seeing the river and the city outlined on the horizon. **That feels like home to me.** That is what is familiar. For those in the Appalachian region, those mountains signify home, family, and familiarity. One question people ask me when I speak about the poverty and health issues to the people in that region is, “**Why don't they just move?**” The answer is not that easy. There is such a **deep, rich history** that is unique to that area. To assume that someone would just move away from that is unfair. If those people move from their home, the problems will still exist to those who are left behind. **It doesn't fix the issue** at all. Part of providing culturally competent care to people is understanding their values and where they come from. The **root issues must be addressed** and the gaps need to be filled in. In order to provide effective care, we need to meet the patient where they are. ***We need to go to their mountains and understand their culture. We need to treat the patient holistically and this is true for all of our patients.***”



Amanda: “I was extremely nervous when we arrived at the clinic, but once I encountered my first patient those feelings disappeared and I was eager to interact with more patients. I learned a lot about triage nursing and interacting with patients in such a short amount of time. I figured out ways to make the questions that needed asked not only easier for me, but I believe for the patients also.”

“I was also able to see the mobile unit ran by the Sisters of Knoxville. The doctor was a nun/sister, as was the nurse practitioner. Being inside of this mobile clinic was simply amazing. This group of sisters/nuns/healthcare professionals travel around Tennessee providing women’s health care. They said that their home base is a Methodist church, which I also found amazing. I was so incredibly happy to hear that the different churches and religions can join together for the cause of providing health care. The mobile clinic performs pap smears, and they also prescribe medications. I was also very interested when I found out that they have a medical record system very similar to the ones we use in the hospital.”





Taran:

“I had the chance to travel with 10 other students and 2 teachers to Cleveland, TN for a 5 day trip. Once arriving we were able to work with Remote Area Medical (RAM) and offer our services to help them provide their 765th clinic! This is my first service learning trip and it was a very humbling experience to be a part of the many people ready to provide care to this community. After patients waited for hours I was happy we had enough volunteers to help make their process go smoothly.”



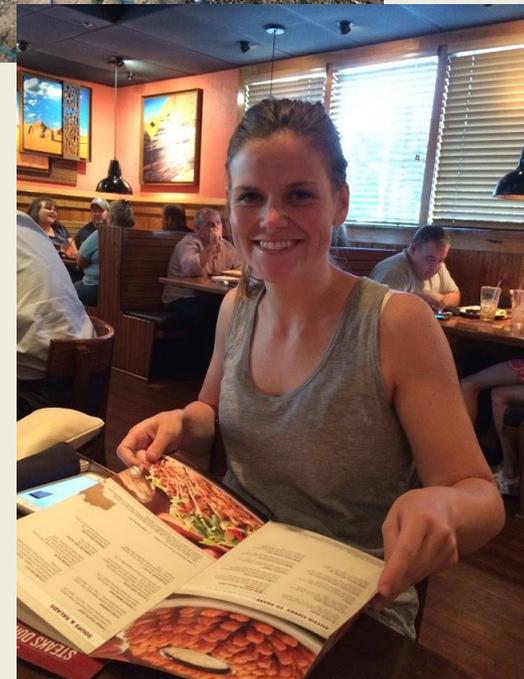
Gynger:

“Now that I feel more comfortable with nursing and have more clinical experience I would like to look into doing similar things like we did here at RAM. As a nursing student I feel that I have a civic responsibility to contribute to the community, even if it is only doing health promotion and education. Today I had one day woman who was half way through her medical assistant program and her vision started to decrease suddenly. It had been progressively getting worse for almost a year now and she had to stop the program because she could not even see the books in front of her it was so blurry. She had kids to support and was determined to finish her program. She said that being here today was the first step in their future. That really hit home with me, because if that happened to me I would have access to eye exams and glasses or contacts.”



Alicia:

“Our main goal is to help those in need yes, but it also helps those who are serving others. We become more knowledgeable in volunteering, but we also grow personally and in our profession by doing this. RAM was a great organization to be a part of. I was amazed at how organized they were, you could tell this wasn’t their first rodeo. I look forward to see what other service learning opportunities I will be apart of in the future, and hope I will come back as nurse to be apart of another RAM clinic.”

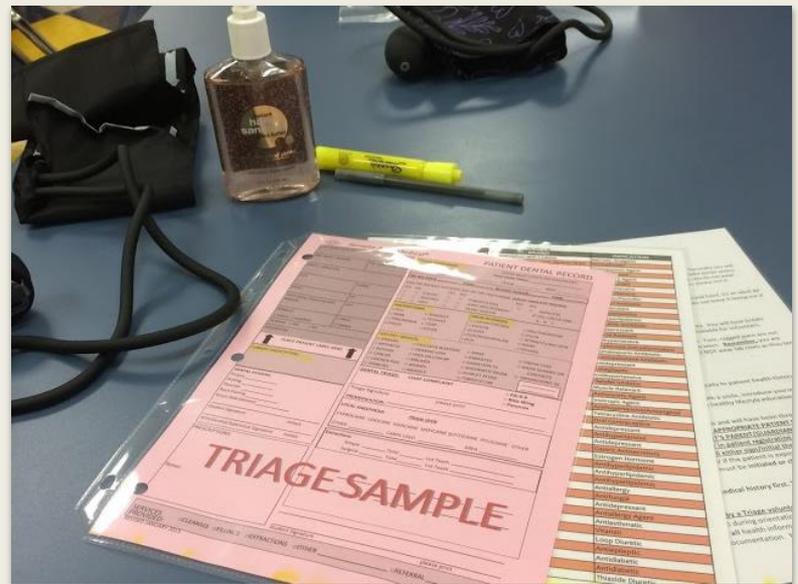




Erika: “The first emotion I felt was excitement. The thought of volunteering and making a difference made the long van ride worth it. Being able to help those in need gives me purpose. The second emotion I felt was anxiety. Not knowing what to expect made me over think things and question my capabilities.” Once the patients started entering the building I began to realize how big this operation was. One of the first patients I saw had been camped out since 5pm the previous day. I then realized how important and necessary health care was and is to these people. If they did not want or need healthcare they would not wait for days in order to see a healthcare provider.”



Erika: “The second part of my day consisted of white water rafting. It was an amazing experience that I will never forget. I didn’t realize how much teamwork was needed. I thought that it was a good bonding experience for us girls that went. For me it was a once in a lifetime experience. I am so thankful that I have had this opportunity to go on this amazing trip and have been able to help people and experience things outside of my comfort zone.”



Brittany: “They also had an area set up in the triage area where patients could be tested for Hepatitis C, which is spread through blood. I did not know before going to the clinic that this area has such an epidemic of Hepatitis C. Before traveling, we did learn that this area has a high prescription pill addiction problem but did not learn anything about drugs that require the use of needles. I was surprised how many people actually went and got tested.”

“I think it is important to remember that not everyone is as fortunate as we are. I love being able to provide whatever I can to those in need whether it be resources or myself. By reflecting on the experience, I really believe that it makes you feel better about yourself and remind you why you do what you do.”

Felecia: “I felt very good about the fact that I was able to get many people to get the testing for either the Hep C, HIV or both. I love to help and give to others. I think you get a feeling of such peace and satisfaction in your soul from giving of yourself. I don’t think that there is any other way in the world to get that feeling. I also felt sad that there was such a need for these services right here in the United States where we live. We are industrialized and one of the top countries in the world but not when it comes to our own nations health care. It really opened my eyes to the needs of those right here in our backyards.”





Maayan: “The first person I met was a male and he was there for dental help. It was hard to understand him at first, but as I was talking to him he told me that he was there to get 28 teeth pulled. I was in shock that he needed that many teeth pulled. I saw him later on in the day after he got his teeth pulled and it kind of made me feel upset and quite sad that he had to go through that because he couldn’t afford to go to a doctor.”



Lacy: “After speaking with a few of the patients during triage or simply walking them to the direction they needed to be, several of them admitted that they hadn’t been to see a doctor in over ten years. They stated that it was due to not being able to afford the cares that they needed. They couldn’t afford medical insurance, and even if they had insurance, they still couldn’t pay the copay required for each doctor’s visit or procedures and screenings.”



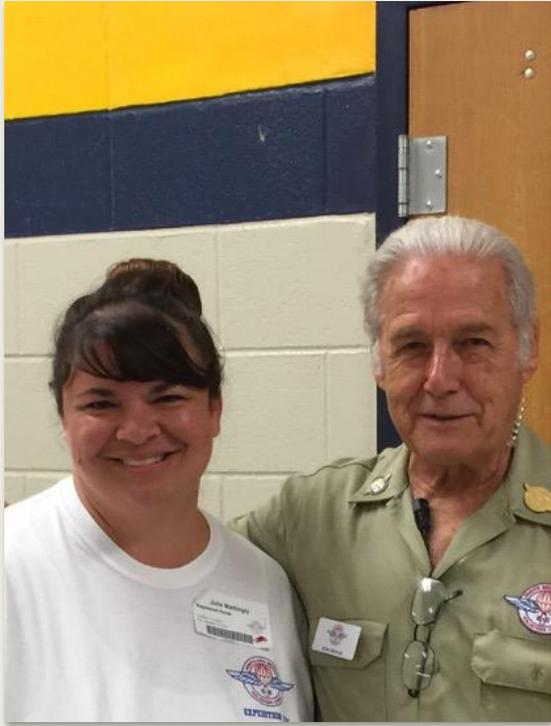
Morning of day #2.....



Remote Area Medical-Appalachia 2015



A visit to Cumberland Falls on the last day of travel.....



Julie Mattingly

The Brave Nursing Faculty Members....



Lisa Preston

