

# EDUCATION

## Medical students aid Third World patients

By Michelle Martin  
Catholic News Service

CHICAGO — Junior will always stand out among Sarah Carreon's memories of her 10 days in Haiti.

Junior is a bright, happy 8-year-old. "He's just beautiful," Carreon said, despite a disfiguring tumor on his face that has made it difficult for him to eat and breathe and is now eating into his skull.

Carreon and nine other students from Jesuit-run Loyola University's Stritch School of Medicine, in the Chicago suburb of Maywood, met Junior at St. Boniface Hospital in Fond des Blanc, a town about 60 miles outside Haiti's capital Port au Prince.

The students were assisting two U.S. doctors as part of an immersion program that connects medical students with service opportunities in the developing world. The program is sponsored by Loyola's campus ministry office.

Now the students and the doctors who were on the trip have mounted a letter-writing campaign to get permission and funding to bring Junior to Loyola University Medical Center for treatment. Carreon and several classmates also plan to continue doing service work once they get their medical degrees.

That's one of the outcomes Sister Brenda Eagan hopes for when she organizes the 10-day-to-three-week trips for first-year medical students. This year, nearly 70 of the 130 members of the class of 2005 shared their admittedly limited medical knowledge and a bit of themselves with poor communities in Haiti, Guatemala, Belize and Ecuador.

"What I want the students to get out of it is a deeper sense of their responsibility, to humanity and to themselves," Sister Eagan told *The Catholic New World*, newspaper of the Chicago Archdiocese.

The program started nine years ago when three students asked the University Ministry Office for help in finding a service opportunity, said Sister Eagan, a member of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The first three students were linked with the Working Boys Center in Quito,

Ecuador, which is still one of the program's sites.

Sister Eagan said that she hopes her program helps people in developing countries see that they are valued.

"We are interested in their lives and we are in solidarity with them," she said.

Christine Curry, 23, of Downer's Grove knew that her two weeks in rural Guatemala would mean mosquito netting, days without running water or electricity and people suffering from parasitic illnesses.

What Curry did not foresee was how much fun it would be to spend 20 minutes teaching a group of children how to throw a Frisbee using just gestures and facial expressions, since many spoke only Mayan languages.

"Some didn't speak a word of Spanish, so we had to communicate basically by sign language," she said. "But we worked so hard at it, sometimes we ended up building more of a rapport that way."

The nine students and two doctors on her trip used a convent in Dolores, Guatemala, as their base. The group made a few day trips to villages, providing simple medical care and exams in schools and churches. Dozens of people would line up even before the students unloaded from trucks the donated medical supplies, said Curry. Many of the villagers had worms or dysentery or even malaria.

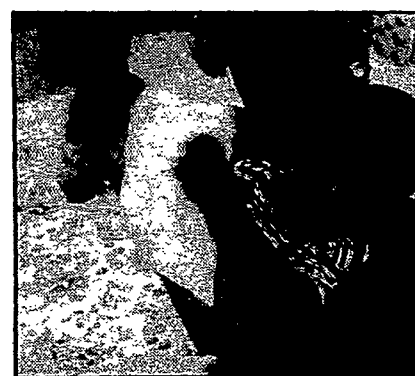
For Curry, learning how to practice medicine "without all the bells and whistles of a modern American hospital" was another benefit of the experience.

Amy Hagan, 23, of Tinley Park assisted in surgery, helped deliver babies and conducted physical exams as part of another team. She was one of nine students sent to Sacred Heart Hospital in Milot, Haiti. If the group of students had not participated in the trip, they might not have experienced three solid weeks of contact with patients



### Students celebrate science

Preschoolers at Rochester's St. Andrews School took part in a science celebration May 10, where they had the chance to try various experiments designed to make them interested in science. Above, teacher Jenny Englert shows Sierra Reid (center) and Jahmanique Barkley how carbon dioxide made from vinegar and baking soda make a balloon expand. At right, Ty-Vearl Williams vigorously shakes a bag of ice with milk, sugar and vanilla to make ice cream as Kristal Martell looks on.



Andrea Dixon

until their last year of medical school.

Hagan said that she and her eight fellow students were "treated like royalty" at the sisters' residence where they stayed, but that many things were a little unfamiliar, such as the food and the lack of reliable hot water. She admitted she had a hard time facing her dinner after having seen the goat that made up the main course tethered in the back yard just a few hours earlier.

Carreon also encountered "lots of goat" in her meals, and some guilt as well. The American students ate well in a country

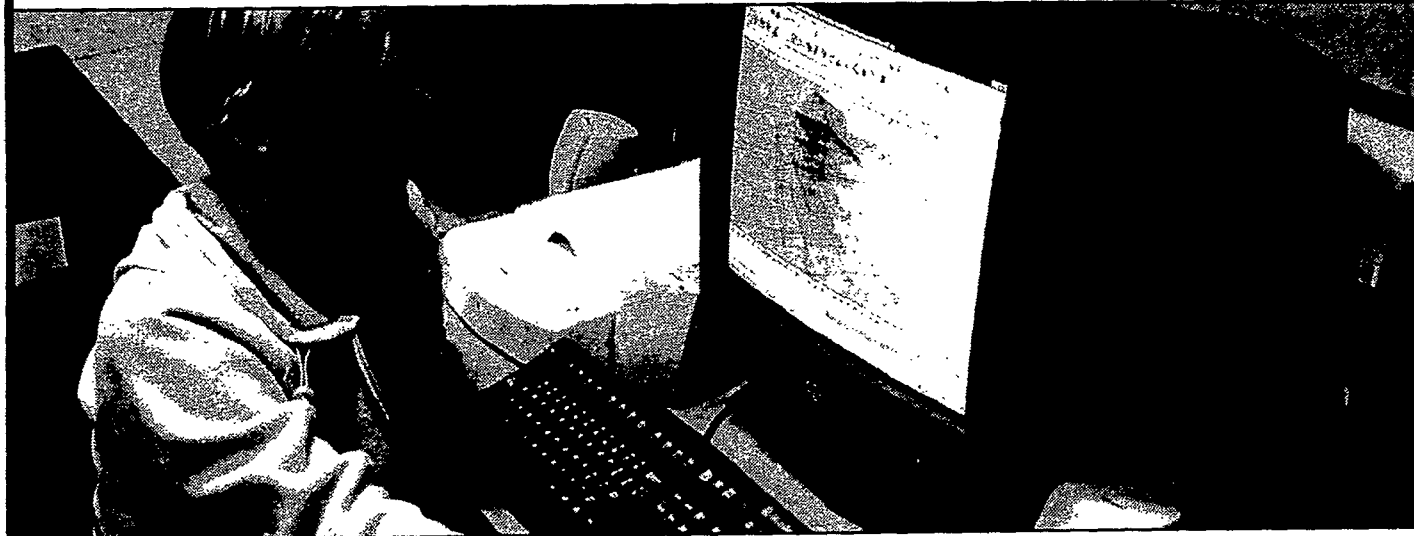
where many people suffer from malnutrition. Nonetheless, her hosts were "very hospitable and gracious," said Carreon.

The students all gained a new appreciation of how people who are destitute by American standards can be happy with what they do have.

The people in Dolores, Guatemala, "really had it together," said Curry.

"They had really strong social structures in the villages we visited, they really helped each other," she said. "But it is different."

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