



Bods Abroad

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Pioneers

by: **Samantha Greif**

TADD Program - Fall 10' & Spring 11'

Finland & N. Ireland

"People grow through experience if they meet life honestly and courageously."

Greetings from Finland! Even though I am 8 hours ahead of WU, I am still living it up as an Ichabod!! I have to tell you, as a nursing major I never expected to be able to study abroad with all of the time requirements and commitments, but here I am and I can tell you it is better than I even imagined. Despite my initial assumptions, there are many study abroad opportunities in the Nursing program. In fact, there are study abroad options for every major.

My self, along with two other WU nursing students have been given the opportunity to study abroad for the whole 2010-2011 academic school year! The Transatlantic Dual Degree Program (TADD) has enabled us to experience life as nursing students not only in Finland, but Northern Ireland as well! We are the first set of students to be sent with this program, so you could say we are pioneers.

In only one short month we have been to three different countries and visited countless cities in Scandinavia including, Helsinki, Mikkeli, Lappeenranta, and Stockholm. We are currently in Savonlinna, a city built on a chain of small islands in eastern Finland.

Fall is coming, and it is beautiful here! We have been lucky to have such beautiful warm weather for the past three weeks. It has been what the Fins describe as "exceptionally" hot, even though it was low 80s this summer. Now the highs are in the 60s and we have seen the first bit of rain for the season. The days are still quite long, but they are getting shorter. The sun does not set until 9 pm, which is great because that means there is more time to explore in the daylight.

The first weekend we spent in Savonlinna we toured

the city. It is beautiful beyond description. There are lakes in every direction and it makes me want to live near the water someday. During our exploration, we visited Olavinlinna Castle, which is a huge international tourist attraction. People travel from all over to attend the Opera festival that is held there during July. It was quite a sight to see and you can definitely tell why people travel such great distance to visit it. I can only imagine how great the acoustics are!



Samantha Greif standing on a bridge in front of the Olavinlinna Castle in Savonlinna, Finland. Photo submitted by Samantha Greif

For the most part we have been spending our time here in clinical. We walk everywhere, even to and from work, it is so refreshing. There is a path from our flats to the hospital that goes through the forest. It is a nice 15-minute walk. The girls and I have an inside joke, that everything is about a 15-minute walk in Finland. I guess you could say it is because it seems like since we've arrived no matter what city we are in, or where we are going it generally takes about 15 minutes to walk there. Even if you ask a Fin, they'll tell you, "on viisitoista minuuttia sinne."

It has been a fascinating to experience how health care works in a welfare state. There are many similarities between American and Finnish nursing care. I find that the differences however, are quite notable. First of all, there are communal scrubs. The nurses retrieve them

from a wardrobe of standard uniforms of all sizes at the hospital, and leave them there to be cleaned at the end of the day. So, moral of the story is no one wears scrubs home. Plus, they have designated shoes for hospital work too, most commonly Birkenstocks. YES, open toed shoes in a hospital, with socks, of course. Also, no one owns a stethoscope they are communal as well. Oh, and if I haven't mentioned, the Finnish are obsessed with recycling, which is carried over to the hospital setting and I love it!



Samantha Greif wearing the nurse uniform at a Finland hospital.
Photo submitted by Samantha Greif

That is only a piece of the huge pie. I mean we have only been here a month and there are ten more to go. It is my hope to grow with each new experience we have on our journey abroad. As Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "People grow through experience if they meet life honestly and courageously." That is exactly what I intend to do.



Friendly Faces

by: Nicole Yonke

Nicaragua Service Learning Program – Summer 10'

"I'm thankful for this opportunity because even though at times it was daunting and uncomfortable, we learned lessons that could never have been taught in a classroom."

My trip to Nicaragua has been life changing. I love the country; I love the people and I am anxious to have the opportunity to help. I feel the photos I have chosen embody the spirit of Nicaragua and our group. While we were presented with adversity, we adapted well to our new environment. Nicaragua is one of the poorest countries in the western hemisphere, but we found ourselves among the happiest of people. They have an air of knowing what needs to be done and working hard to make it happen. Many times, it was painful to see the younger children carrying such heavy responsibility such as caring for younger sibling while parents work. However, you will never hear a Nicaraguan complain about their life circumstance. They put their nose to the grindstone and get by. However, they are never in despair. They are dancing, laughing, singing and embracing life for what it is. It was a gratifying experience to be around people that were happy with what they had, even though by common measuring standards it isn't much.



Christina Bowden and Nicole Yonke, holding a napping child, in La Chureca, Nicaragua. Photo submitted by Nicole Yonke

Another aspect of the country is everything is beautiful. In the short time we were there we had the privilege of seeing natural landmarks such as volcanoes, mountains and waterfalls. This is significant because this is the first time I had seen any of these. We were in paradise swimming in a volcanic crater. The amazing thing is these diverse climates were all located within hours of each other. Every day we witnessed the type of landscapes that takes your breath away and it never grew old.

I'm thankful for this opportunity because even though at times it was daunting and uncomfortable, we learned lessons that could never have been taught in a classroom. We learned through living, which is the best way to learn because it just happens. Never have I been so graciously accepted into a household as in El Limon. They

were so kind to absolute strangers that were sharing their space and eating their food. It made me realize all the lessons I still have yet to learn; if for some reason a person thinks they have nothing left to learn, they should travel.



I Heart China

by: Ashley McDonald

International Business Entrepreneur Program –
Summer 10'



During my lifetime, I've experienced many moments that sparked an enthusiasm in me that left me wanting more. As a child, that excitement came from scoring the game running point in double overtime, running downstairs on Christmas day to see if the snow had fallen overnight, and getting behind the wheel for the first time as my father explained "let 'er rip." Realizing in my short years of being an "adult", I've come to the conclusion that the moments that have left the most impression on me over the years are intangible, transformational experiences that creep up on me when I least expect it. This again happened as I found myself enrolling in a study abroad program that would take me across the world to China for three unforgettable weeks.

Lead by our remarkable Professor, Dr. Michael Stocia, our 9 person brigade of graduate and undergraduate busi-

ness students began to prepare for an International Business Experience early in the semester. In addition to extensive research about the country of China, we were each given a business project, which compared and contrasted United States and Chinese practices in a variety of manners. Prior to departing for China, my dedicated partner and I keep in constant contact with our Chinese counterparts, who were volunteering to work on the business project alongside us. Mind you, all communication between our group was held as we sat several thousand miles apart, with a 13 hour time difference between us, and neither myself or my American partner had any prior experience with the Chinese language.

As we arrived in China, 10 days were spent site-seeing the areas of Shanghai, Beijing, Xi'An, Wuhan, and Hong Kong. Perhaps it was the magic of being in a different county that brought out the child-like essence in each of us, perhaps it was the fact that we stayed together like school children on an anticipated field trip. However, I believe it was the bare-bones factor that we realized how lucky we are to be coming from the United States, and to have a chance to break from our comfort zones of Midwest America to be just one person walking on the streets of a city full of 17 million people that each has a story to tell.

After becoming engulfed in the culture as a tourist, we were warmly welcomed in Wuhan by the very Chinese partners we had been communicating with over the last few months. It was during this 10 day stay, we became not only students, but guests, and were extended courtesy and respect that I have never before witnessed until this point. The only thing more emotional than the arrival, was our tearful departure from our new "brothers and sisters."



Ashley McDonald site seeing in China. Photo submitted by Ashley McDonald

The amazing thing about the human experience is that we really aren't all that different. Yes, my experience in China was unique to my memories of it, however, it was a collaborative effort that could not have been made possible without the interaction between myself and my classmates, our ardent mentor, and new found Chinese family. The camaraderie among our group strengthened as we became familiar with each other's personalities, food preferences, and sleeping habits; it was then we vowed to visit again, in years to come.

It was late one evening in Hong Kong, walking among the crowd of the bustling street market. At this point, we had been so used to hearing the Chinese language, hearing English was something unexpected and unusual. My friend and classmate struck conversation with a woman who was bartering with the same vendor as us, looking to walk away with a souvenir for little to nothing. After he described we were students from Kansas, she happily exclaimed, "Oh really, I was born in Topeka!"

And that was the moment. The moment we experienced being on foreign territory, with only our passports to identify our true identities that the light bulb went off. It's a small world after all. And in perspective, a day's worth of travel lead 10 business enthusiasts, travel enthusiasts, across three counties (including our layover in Japan) in a blink of an eye. From this I have gained forever friendships, an appreciation of the world, and a business experience that I anxiously await to describe during my future endeavors. I'll make sure to add it to the top of my list of moments from now on; one right below holding my baby sister for the first time.

Parisian Expeditions

By: Kristen Hearell

Language and Culture in Paris – Summer 2010

In one of his many writings the author Ernest Hemingway describes Paris as a moveable feast. I could not agree more with this description of the City of Lights. My Parisian adventure was full of new sights, tastes, and friendships.

I had often dreamt of participating in a study abroad, especially to a francophone country. Just as frequently I imagined the difficulty of balancing to two rigorous majors (Math and Finance) with a study abroad. I was elated when the Modern Languages department announced a summer Paris Language and Culture study. I knew I must seize this great opportunity to do a study abroad and finally finish my French minor.

This summer I traveled to Paris accompanied by my

French Professor, Sophie Delahaye, and six other classmates. As part of the emersion experience each student stayed with a host family located in a different neighborhood around Paris. I must admit the prospect of a home stay was intimidating at first. I questioned my ability to both find my host family given my poor sense of direction and converse entirely in French. After asking directions from (several) very kind Parisians I found my host family. I was lucky enough to stay with a dynamic widow and three young professionals, who soon put me at ease. We ate, laughed, and sang French songs together.

In my host family each morning began with a leisurely breakfast, typically toasted baguette and confiture de cassis (black currant jam) overlooking a beautiful cathedral, St Etienne D'Orves. After breakfast, the class would meet up at Saint Michael's fountain in the Latin Quarter. Each day we visited historically important sites around Paris, beginning with the Notre Dame Cathedral, located in the oldest part of Paris, the Ile de la Cite. Each student was responsible for leading two cultural expeditions. Some of our expeditions included Montmartre, Luxembourg Gardens, Centre de Pompidou, L'Opera, and Pere Lachaise cemetery. After our excursions, the group headed toward La Grande Epicerie a gourmet market, for a quick lunch. Then we participated in French grammar lessons at L'Etoile school for international students. The classes were challenging, but well worth the effort. I improved my French language skills and made three great new friends.





Kristen Hearrell and fellow traveler. Photo Submitted by Kristen Hearrell.

Our schedule was set for a majority of the week; however, we were given evenings and weekends to explore the city on our own. My weekend expeditions were fantastic truly, out of dream. I toured Paris at night accompanied by a dear French friend, Marion, who was a foreign exchange student in Topeka many years ago. Paris at night was marvelous with bustling street cafés, opera goers, and musicians. That weekend, the Champs Elysees, had been converted into a giant farm and farmers market highlighting the importance of buying homegrown products. It was strange to see the very posh Champs Elysee highlighting wheat, squash, beans, and sheep instead of haute couture. I had done a bit of pre-trip prepping (which I strongly recommend for those studying abroad) and was able to purchase tickets to the opening day of the French Open, one of the largest tennis tournaments in the world. Marion and I watched several world class tennis players and actually met one of the French tennis players Oliver Patience. That weekend we also toured Versailles, where we watched a water show accompanied by baroque music. Again we were incredibly lucky, the fountains at Versailles run only six times per year.



The beautiful fountain in Versailles. Photo submitted by Kristen Hearrell

At first I questioned my ability to participate in a study abroad. I now consider the study abroad experience as one of the best adventures in my life. In fact, I am planning a return trip next summer to visit my new Parisian friends. I encourage all students to research study abroad options. It is never too late to participate in study abroad.

Orphans of the Lost Generation

Stefanie Stuever

Operation Rescue, Ethiopia – Summer 10'



“You can watch videos, read books, do research and know statistics but it is not until you are really there, immersed in a culture, that you come to realize how very differently people live.”

On June 4, 2010, we began our long journey to Ethiopia. We boarded the first plane and I found myself feeling restless. I was on my way to Africa! After enduring 20 hours in the air and finally getting off the fourth plane, I was incredibly excited, but also incredibly exhausted. The first few days involved not only adjusting to a different culture and different food, but also an eight hour time change!

My family and I worked with an organization called Operation Rescue. Established ten years ago in Mekelle, Ethiopia as a preschool for impoverished families, it has now expanded to serve poor children of all ages by offering a quality meal at lunchtime and a place to study and play during the half day they are not attending classes at the government schools. Over the past few years, a Lawrence, Kansas-based organization called Fields of Promise was established in response to the large number of orphans living in Ethiopia. The HIV epidemic that has swept

through the continent of Africa has wiped out an entire generation of parents. Fields of Promise has formed a partnership with Operation Rescue to provide housing and support to these orphans. Because of the great need for medical care in this population that has been so effected by HIV, a clinic was just built at the Operation Rescue site and a full time nurse, Gabriele Michael, was hired three weeks before we arrived. My family's primary focus was on helping him do initial physical exams and set up medical charts on more than 300 children and the staff involved with Operation Rescue.



Stefanie Stuever, back row, with fellow travelers and children at Operation Rescue. Photo Submitted by Stefanie Stuever

While my parents helped Gabriele Michael with the actual exams, the rest of our group got to interact with the kids while we checked them in and took their heights, weights, eye exams and entertained them as they waited. Hanging out with the children was by far the best part of my Ethiopian experience. The preschoolers wanted nothing more than to hold our hands and sit in our laps. They would come running up to us and kiss our cheeks. The elementary kids were excited to play games and braid our hair while older kids wanted to practice their English and hear about school and sports in the U.S. The excitement of tie-dying t-shirts extended to all age groups of kids and the staff.



Children at Operation Rescue. Photo Submitted by Stefanie Stuever

Communicating with the people was definitely a challenge. Many of the kids were just beginning to learn English and we obviously could not speak Tigrina, their native language. The staff at Operation Rescue helped to translate, especially with the medical issues, but the more time we spent hanging out with the kids, the more apparent it became that words are not always necessary. Things like laughter and love and compassion are universal languages that extend beyond cultural and economic differences.

After returning home from Ethiopia, I wanted to sit down and map out what I experienced, what I had learned, and how my life was going to change as a result. I have begun to realize that my trip to Ethiopia is something that I will slowly unpack for the rest of my life.



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