

# Knighly Adventures Abroad

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### Advice to future study abroad participants:

My advice to others wishing to participate in studying abroad is DO IT! Don't let anything hold you back. Even though it may be expensive or take up your summer, it was worth it! Go for as long as you can because I only went for a week and I wished I was there longer. There is really no way to put an experience like this into words it is something that I think everyone needs to see for their self.

**If I could do it over, I would...** Try to learn a little more Spanish prior to the trip so communication with the children is easier.

**Major(s):** Nursing

**Years/Term Abroad:** Summer 2014

**Name of program and why you chose it:** This program was the summer pediatric and community nursing clinical in the Dominican Republic. I chose this program because I have always wanted to study abroad and this was the first chance as a nursing student at Bellarmine to study abroad in our field.

**Describe the Housing Situation:** Housing in the DR reminded me of living in the dorms in Kennedy and Newman except multiple bunk beds in one room rather than just two beds. The showers and toilets were exactly like the dorms. There was no air conditioning in the room, we just left the windows opened and had fans going. Although the dormitory was nothing special, I think that having us all together in one room really helped us grow a special bond that we did not have before this trip. We all became very close very quickly. We did not spend much time in the room except to sleep so really it was all we needed!

**Best Memory:** Without a doubt the best memory for me was when we were going to church in the "Hole." The hole is an inactive garbage dump that is now made into a little community. We were getting out of our van and walking down a big hill and I hear young kids yelling "the Americans are here!" It was amazing to hear and see how excited they were for us to be there and how much they love the Americans.

**How has this experience enriched your Bellarmine educational experience?** I feel like studying abroad is something everyone needs to experience. I cannot put into words how amazing this trip was. What we were able to see in the short time we were in the Dominican Republic was a greater eye opener to life itself than any other class or clinical you can take here in the United States.

**Greatest Challenge:** The greatest challenge for me was dealing with the guilt on how comfortable I live compared to how they live. The poverty I saw breaks my heart. This experience really opened my eyes to a world that others live in; that I had no idea existed.

**Experiences with Culture Shock or Reverse Culture Shock:** For myself, there was a huge culture shock. All the way from their living conditions, to how hard they work and how friendly and open hearted everyone was. The communities are so trusting and everyone looks after each other.

**What you know now that you didn't know before going abroad:** I never realized how sheltered I had been before going to the Dominican Republic. I had no idea that people lived in such harsh conditions. The amount of joy and happiness they have will also continue to amaze me. This has been an overall amazing experience that I hope to be able to experience again someday.



**"I am blessed to be a blessing to others"**  
This quote is something that I think we all took away from this trip. We all had so many emotions going on throughout the week and wondered why we are so fortunate to live in the United States. John Martinez, a Go ministries leader said, that we were all blessed to be a blessing to others.