



L&C Group Spending Alternative Spring Break in Guatemala

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GODFREY – This spring break, seven L&C students, two registered nurses and two administrators are traveling to Guatemala, in partnership with the Mustard Seed Peace Project, to help others who are less fortunate.

The alternative spring-breakers will spend five days in a small village of 400 people called Virginia, located a 10-hour bus ride from Guatemala City, and work to establish a rural health clinic that will serve the village, mainly women and children. By addressing their medical, dental, educational, nutritional and economic needs, the college hopes to empower the native youth to become instruments of change in their homes, communities and countries.

They will also have the opportunity, after their mission work, to squeeze in some sightseeing.

“It is important for our students to have global experiences as part of their academic experience at L&C,” said L&C President Dale Chapman. “Using the spring break as a time to establish a rural health clinic in Guatemala is a great demonstration of the commitment of our nursing students, faculty, the dean of health sciences and our vice president of student engagement.”

It’s all part of a “glocalization” movement, which encourages service program participants to think global and act local.

“Cultural experiences for nursing students are now an integral part of nursing curriculums across the country,” said Dean of Health Sciences Donna Meyer. “Accreditation standards require addressing cultural competency and global awareness. International trips are becoming more and more common in schools of nursing, and we are excited about this venture. I believe it will be a life changing experience for all involved.”

A nursing faculty member from Hines Community College, who has completed previous service trips, is accompanying the group.

Second year nursing students were eligible to participate, and were responsible for all costs incurred. Many utilized fundraisers to help make the trip, overseen by L&C's Student Activities, a reality.

Students often cite immersion experiences as being among the most powerful and life-changing experiences of their lives. This group will live-blog their experiences at www.lc.edu/service.

“While many choose to spend spring break relaxing or vacationing, these students have opted to volunteer their time and engage with these villagers for the good of the global community,” said Vice President of Student Engagement Sean Hill. “In return, they’re getting a personal enrichment experience they are likely to never forget.”

L&C is a member of the Community Colleges for International Development (CCID) program. CCID is a consortium of 160 two-year colleges in the U.S. and 12 other countries, and is the pre-eminent two-year college organization in the United States working on all aspects of global vocational/professional education, and training overseas. Its mission is to take the community college model and share it internationally, while internationalizing it as well.

The Mustard Seed Peace Project (MSPP) is a grassroots non-profit organization with 510 (c) (3) status whose vision is to support youth in underprivileged countries. In Guatemala, the group has purchased a little more than 11 acres of land in the municipality of Playa Grande, located in the Ixcán region. On this land, with the help of the people of the village of Virginia, they have dug a well, built a park and several other structures, one of which will be used as a clinic for L&C's visiting medical team. Plans for Guatemala include an educational sponsorship program, a nutritional education program and several micro-economic projects for the women of the village of Virginia.

The community of Virginia is located a little less than three miles along a dirt road from the municipal seat of Playa Grande. This is a region that suffered greatly during the 36-year long Guatemalan Civil War, lasting from 1960-1996. During this time most families fled their homes and ancestral lands. Because of the remoteness of the community, the lack of infrastructure and the fact that employment opportunities are limited, the families that remain continue to suffer from malnourishment and extreme poverty.



Caption: A group from L&C left on Friday, March 7, to spend an alternative spring break in Guatemala

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