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Office of University
Communications

March 9, 2017

Dream Ministries Team Provided Medical Care to Nearly 600 Individuals

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Five representatives from the Hunt School of Nursing at Gardner-Webb University recently spent a week providing medical care to people in the Dominican Republic. The short-term experience touched their hearts in lasting ways. “I know my life was changed, and I plan to make this a regular part of my life,” shared Dr. Sharon Starr, nursing school dean. “I’m ready to take care of people who have nothing and can’t get care anywhere else.”



Susan Gilbert, left, and Moriah Specht care for a patient in the Dominican Republic.

Also making the trip were assistant professor and director of the Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) Program Dr. Anna Hamrick and FNP students, Moriah Specht of Taylorsville, N.C., Jade Kiger of Mount Airy, N.C., and Susan Gilbert of Statesville, N.C. They were part of a 32-member team of physicians, nurses, pharmacists, various health professionals and laymen working through Dream Ministries, which is affiliated with Aldersgate United Methodist Church of Shelby, N.C., and the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church.

“Dream Ministries is made up of a beautiful group of caring individuals who use their gifts to minister to the Haitian people living in the Dominican Republic,” Hamrick asserted. “Our Gardner-Webb group were blessed to be given the opportunity to work alongside such amazing Christian healthcare providers.”



Dr. Sharon Starr, Dean of Hunt School of Nursing

The group set up health clinics at five different bateys (settlements) during the week treating over 540 people. A surgical team cared for patients in the local hospital performing 51 surgeries. “These people were in so much need for healthcare services,” Gilbert assessed. “They were happy that someone was there to help them.” The diagnoses ranged from respiratory ailments to sexually transmitted diseases and chronic conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes.

“It made me thankful for all we have in America. We take for granted being able to go to the medicine cabinet and get Tylenol for pain,” Specht affirmed. “These people are very happy despite the poverty they live in. They seemed to make the best out of their situation.”

Kiger and Hamrick assisted with surgeries in the hospital. “I didn’t realize how far behind they are,” Kiger observed. “It was like stepping back into the 1940s. There is no safety for the nurses. There was a post-operative patient right beside somebody who had a gangrene-looking rash on his leg.”

Dr. Anna Hamrick,
GWU Assistant
Professor and Director
of the Family Nurse
Practitioner Program

Initiating a service learning mission trip experience for nurse practitioner students has been a goal for Hamrick since she became a GWU faculty member. Hamrick had the opportunity to go on a similar trip as an undergrad at GWU. “I’m very thankful that it worked out and we had an amazing group to go with us,” she stated. “Our students represented GWU well and showed God’s love to the people we cared for. They each have beautiful testimonies and were integral parts of the ministry team. My heart was blessed observing them in patient care and seeing their confidence grow each day.”

Above, Jade Kiger takes blood pressure of a patient in the Dominican Republic. At left, the group from Gardner-Webb: (from left) Jade Kiger, Dr. Sharon Starr, Dr. Anna Hamrick, Moriah Specht and Susan Gilbert

the group from Gardner-Webb

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university that prepares students to become critical thinkers, effective leaders and compassionate servants in the global community. Emphasizing a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics, Gardner-Webb ignites learning and service opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.