

A call to help

Norwell grad gains wide range of medical experience in Nicaragua

By DEVAN FILCHAK

Kyra Zadylak, 21, knew that there was a Nicaragua mission trip as an option for the medical practicum at Manchester University when she transferred there last year.

The Norwell graduate was disappointed to find the class was full when she signed up for classes after being accepted as a transfer student in June. She would have to wait for the next annual trip in January of 2019 during her senior year.

At the last minute, one of her professors contacted her to say a spot opened up. Zadylak couldn't believe it.

In January, Zadylak was one of about 20 Manchester students who went on a three-week medical practicum to the Nicaraguan capital of Managua and three villages — Amak, Wisuh and Wina. The students traveled with about 12 doctors that varied in specialties from dentistry to primary care to women's health to even veterinary medicine.

"It (the trip) was one of the reasons I fell in love with Manchester,"



Kyra Zadylak, center, smiles at a baby while on a medical practicum trip in Nicaragua with other Manchester University students. The Norwell graduate would like to eventually become a pediatrician. (Photo submitted)

the former Trine University student said. "There were so many great things about it. I am really thankful."

The group was in each village for about three days and got experience working in each sector, including pharmacy, veterinarian services

and pediatrics. Zadylak said it was a great feeling working on a team with physicians and getting the experience of talking with patients in a way she has not been able to in the United States.

The biology and chemistry major

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said she would like to eventually be a pediatrician, and this trip made her want to care for children even more.

"It made me want to focus on kids even more," she said. "It definitely made me want to work with rural areas. They don't have access to medicines like we do."

Zadylak gathered a wide scope of medical experiences. In one instance, a man and his dog were carried in a hammock by their friends for four hours after falling about 100 feet from a cliff. Because the medical group was in the town, the man and his dog were able to be treated enough to make the day-long trip up the river to the nearest hospital.

"If we weren't there, that

could have been a very different situation," she said.

She even got experience working with animals. The veterinarian with the group treated some dogs, but many of the animals treated were cows and pigs. One procedure even gave Zadylak experience with an emergency Caesarean section on a pig.

Despite growing up in Bluffton not far from farmland, Zadylak's only experience with animals were with dogs.

Zadylak said the villages were small, and the people were welcoming, despite language barriers.

It was a cultural experience that Zadylak will not forget. She said the group ate rice and beans for three

meals a day and bathed in the river. All of the water the group consumed had to be put through a water filtration system they built themselves.

Zadylak hopes to go to other countries again one day to do medical work — maybe even with a group of Manchester students when she is a physician.

A couple of the doctors who went on the most recent trip were doctors who were once Manchester pre-med students who were on the same medical practicum trip, she said.

"I think it would be an amazing experience to come back as a physician," she said. "I really hope I am able to do that."

devan@news-banner.com



Kyra Zadyak, center, assists a dentist on a procedure while on a medical practicum trip to Nicaragua. The pre-med student was one of about 20 Manchester University students who went on the annual Nicaragua trip. (Photo submitted)