

Convo on Medical Practicum Viajama 1985

College Provides Unique World Experience During January Term

By Rebecca Bishop, News Journal, Nov. 25, 1985

With his slides and carefully chosen words, Dr. Edward Miller recently took a convocation audience at Manchester College to a village of the world where there's no doctor, electricity, or running water. Miller, professor of chemistry, spoke under the heading of "Donde No Hay Doctor," (where there is no doctor).

Since 1981 students seeking an off-campus experience in the medical or Spanish fields have had the opportunity to travel with Miller during the month of January. After visiting the tropics of Guatemala and Panama, the group arrives in the Dominican Republic to provide medical care to the people of a small village there.

Also included in the groups have been doctors, dentists, and medical school students, usually past graduates of M.C. Together, they pull teeth using a simple rocking chair as a dentist chair, and treat medical problems. Last year, more than 1,000 people were treated during the two weeks at the clinic.

For a fee of \$850, the travelers find out "what it means to be poor", Miller said. They sleep together on the hard floor of a small one-room building, feast on beans, rice and tortillas, and bathe and do laundry in the cold water of a knee-deep river.

Students who have gone on the trip helped Miller recreate their experience. Through skits, they showed the difficulty of being unable to speak the language, and what it was like to wake to the noises of animals outside their door.

The students also shared their reflections of the trip. Nancy Stickel, a junior from South Bend, commented that she remembers best the people she met. Even though they didn't speak the same language, she became friends with many of the villagers, she said. "I learned that we are the people of the world and a smile is the same in every language."

Other students added that they had gained the knowledge of what it's like to be a minority, and developed a deeper appreciation for the things they have here in the U.S.

Miller will be returning to the Dominican Republic in January of 1986.