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“Medical Service Learning in Guatemala”
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Zip-lining over Lake Atitlán, riding horses up an active volcano, and creating unforgettable memories while learning about healthcare in a developing country, this is what happened when I chose to study abroad in Guatemala. While I now cherish these moments, these experiences would have never happened if I had not chosen to take a chance. I was the freshman who walked past the Study Abroad table at orientation and said, “No thank you, studying abroad is not for me. I could never do that!” Why would I leave everything familiar to me just so I could take classes in a different country? My whole perspective changed whenever I learned about Campbell’s faculty led programs.

These programs are designed by Campbell faculty, the same professors that teach in Buies Creek. They’re mentors you already know and trust. Having two of my favorite professors from the Biology Department lead our trip made every aspect exciting. While we were in Guatemala, we were divided into pairs and placed in various healthcare settings. My partner and I were placed in the pediatric unit of the National Orthopedic Hospital. I was able to volunteer alongside licensed Guatemalan physical therapists and nurses, and observe how their culture and traditions differ from those within the United States. I was surprised to see how similar their culture was to ours. Spending so much time in a Spanish speaking healthcare environment motivated me to further my Spanish speaking abilities once I returned. Furthering this skill will be helpful in my future career.

Studying abroad changed my perspective. I have been inspired to travel around the world, something I never thought I would do. I can’t wait until my next opportunity to be involved in a medical service trip. I am forever thankful of the permanent lessons I learned through my time in Guatemala. The way I look at those around me and my surrounding will be forever impacted. As the American writer Henry Miller stated, “One’s destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things.”