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RN-BSN Students Participating in Immersion Project Become Change Agents for Migrant Workers and Their Children

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Purpose: Access to health care is a challenge for migrant workers due to lack of resources and affordability; resulting in high incidence of communicable diseases, chronic illnesses, infant mortality, malnutrition, sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS and other serious illnesses. The purpose of the immersion was to serve/educate migrant workers/families in dire need of health care. Students participated in this immersion experience by caring for adults and children in a rural underserved population in a culturally competent manner.

Methods: A qualitative study (Munhall, 2012) on nursing students conducting prevention/education on HIV/AIDS, obesity, human trafficking, domestic violence, alcohol abuse, bullying, backpack safety, breast, testicular and colorectal CA. This collaborative interprofessional effort was between Nursing, Dental Hygiene, Haitian organizations and churches in Immokalee, Florida.

Results: This initiative exposed students to WHO, Healthy People 2030, UN millennial goals by serving/educating in 3 churches, 1st church-109 people, 2nd 59 people, 3rd 107 Boys/girls club-650 children, Center for girls 59 total 984. Of 22 Interviews conducted on students and transcribed, 15 were selected for content shown below. Four major themes emerged from students' stories: 1) fear of deportation; 2) poor health due to unhealthy lifestyle; 3) economic constraints; 4) vulnerable to violence/abuse

Student #1 "Children are fragile and resilient at same time. It is blessing providing care to challenged populations with health disparities. Interacting with children, seeing happiness is contagious. Teaching about health was rewarding; this experience was rewarding yet humbling, making me appreciate things I have and don't have".

Student #2 "I realize basic screenings are necessary, vital to these individuals; interest and enthusiasm of students make me do it over again. If I have changed one person's mind I may have saved a life, making a positive impact on someone. To be part of making a difference in families' lives has driven me (RN) to do more and to be the best I can be in caring for others. These families live in hazardous environments and are uneducated on how to deal with issues including lice. In the nursing world, we are surrounded by caring and compassionate individuals who share the same drive to give and protect. The opportunity to work with colleagues on this Mission trip were amazing; I am beyond grateful to work side by side with them."

Student #3 The unit director boys & girls club carries that same heart for Immokalee by giving people a chance for a better future for not only themselves, but for families. I cannot wait to see what we will continue to bring to people as individuals and nurses.

These shacks opened my eyes to see how even close the world is different; we as students have power and ability to help others. It was very humbling to see all these shacks; it was great to help and give back to the community.”

Student #4 Children born from migrant workers came to USA with an ethic of hard work, showing resilience in overcoming obstacles. Immigrant families have similar strengths, likely to have support from extended family members and likely to have both parents. They have a tremendous desire for their children to be successful at school. Immigrant children/families struggle; some are dealing with past traumas or persecutions, fear of deportation; some have little education or no skills to find a job that support their families, allowing them to access health care. Many thoughts came to my mind approaching Immokalee. Will activities planned have positive impact in their lives? Is this something that can enrich my life and my nursing profession?

Student #5 The immersion trip was a life awakening experience to help communities by promoting healthy lifestyles, achieving healthy behaviors through education with backpack safety. Benefits of Physical Activity were main topics presented to school age children at Boys and Girls Club. This presentation educated this segment of the community regarding healthy lifestyles but was meant to increase self-esteem and motivate them to take care of their health. I can definitely confirm that it enriched my nursing profession as a culturally competent nurse and a community health nurse. I received satisfaction from the simplest smiles and laughs of the children enlightening me as a nurse with gift of helping others.

Student #6 "Integrating education in our immersion trip was inspiring! Visiting schools, talking to community and understanding their needs was important to me" What I appreciate about this trip was that we were able to provide much needed services with a great impact to a segment of the community that has no access to basic health care, providing health screenings and helping to identify diseases in their earliest stages"

Student # 7 "Providing education to teens gave me a sense of fulfillment; I was able to bring awareness to a important matter happening in our society. As mother of a teenager, I was speaking as a nurse and mother to draw attention to the topic on human trafficking, and domestic violence". It was a rewarding experience serving these people. It motivated me to want to continue being a positive impact to the people in my community and around the world participating in medical mission trips".

Student #8 "The most impactful time was spending time with children. Many families had multiple children with little means to support them. I was happy to play and care for children while parents received readings; they were grateful. Many children act as translators for parents because parents only speak their native language". Community nursing and education are very necessary since there is less access and resources.

Student #9 "I was very fortunate to have opportunities, teaching young ladies about obesity and surprised to see how their were engaged, aware of on how obesity can affect lives. If immediate action is not taken, many will suffer from an array of serious health disorders. By teaching students to cultivate healthy habits early, schools can prevent obesity in later adulthood"

Student #10 "I really enjoyed interacting with students at High School; they were very receptive and attentive about education provided. I received feedback with some sharing personal stories. Nurses are teachers". –

Student #11 "Taking blood sugars and educating young adults about the risk factors of diabetes was important. Lack of knowledge behind why eating healthy and maintaining healthy sugars was alarming. Those with diagnosed with diabetes do not take care of themselves due to lack of supplies, either needles, insulin, glucose strips, etc is alarming. If unchecked they run risks of becoming very ill. Teaching kids about human trafficking and health was rewarding. It was amazing to see how much they know. Many knew a lot of things at a small age! Their energy and participation made it just fun!

Taking blood sugars and educating young adults/adults about risk factors of diabetes was important. Lack of knowledge behind why eating healthy and maintaining healthy sugars was alarming. Diabetics do not take care of themselves because lack of supplies, either needles, insulin, glucose strips, etc is alarming. If unchecked these people run major risks of becoming very ill."

Student #12 This medical mission trip allowed us to serve the community. These individuals are at higher risk for chronic diseases due to several factors: socio-economic status, lack of health insurance, geographical area, low level of education, genetic predisposition."

Student #13 "The overall experience was life changing; I felt we had traveled outside the US. I had never seen such a community like this one before, so many challenges to deal with. The amount of help this community received from our group was essential to meet their needs; the lesson they taught us was an eye-opening experience about the importance to get out and help others and be an active member of the community. I feel compelled to participate in these events in the future, and use my voice to positively impact others, especially those at communities at risk. I will never forget the friends I made and the time I spent."

Student #14 Daily exercises include 1) Strength bones and muscles including the heart; 2) Increase level of endorphins, a natural hormone and increase level of happiness. 3) Decrease anxiety, blood pressure and chronic pain; 4) Maintain healthy body weight; 5) Increase energy levels; 6) Decrease risk for osteoporosis; 7) Relax and sleep well; dance and tone body.8) Go outside with friends- walk, hike, bike ride or swim; 9) Take yoga class with friends, sharing healthy meal together; 10) Keep journal of workouts; take pictures of progress to boost motivation; 11) Run (or walk) in breast cancer awareness walks; 12) Stretch muscles before /after each session.

Student #15 "The health education outreach intervention took place at a Boys/Girls Club providing handwashing and teeth brushing education. Nursing rhymes were used to teach handwashing and teeth brushing. Kids practiced their skills using an alligator mouth". Educated youth will become educated adults. Health education has a positive impact on the community.

Conclusion: This humanitarian mission served this underserved vulnerable population. Students improved their ability to provide culturally competent care, anticipating of migrant workers/needs in Immokalee, Florida.

Title:

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References:

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Abstract Summary:

The purpose of the immersion was to serve/educate migrant workers/families in dire need of health care. Students participated in this immersion experience by caring for adults and children in a rural under-served population in a culturally competent manner.

Content Outline:

History of Immersion Project

Preparation

Implementation

Evaluation

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