Alicia’s Major: Nursing

Program: UW Nursing in Malawi, Summer

Academic Life: UW Nursing in Malawi took the place of my Community Clinic requirement for the School of Nursing. The group that went to Malawi consisted of eight current nursing students and two faculty members. Our work was done at the homes of Malawi people where we did a community health assessment. Another classroom setting we experienced was at Miqlat Hope Center where we engaged with children. Finally, we had the opportunity to see first-hand the public health care system to which the people of Malawi have access.

Most Memorable Moments: The most memorable experience for me was the children. I had the amazing opportunity to interact with over 500 children. Interacting with every age was different; however, I did notice one thing in common. At first the children were a little shy, but after opening up and giving them a simple smile they would do the same thing back. I felt shy as well; I was out of my element. The language barrier and cultural differences made some interacting hard. At the end of the time spent with them and the smiles, high-fives, and hugs, I knew leaving Malawi I had gained over 500 new friends.

Advice to Someone Considering this Program: DO IT! This was an experience of a lifetime. In terms of health care, this program offers a variety of experiences which allow you to explore the possibilities of which type of nursing is for you. Along with the global health experience, another aspect of this program is that you get to teach nursing. You put together material and present it in front of audiences of all ages. A third experience is nursing with children, giving you ample time to explore if pediatric nursing is your calling. Overall, the experiences gained in Malawi can’t be summed up in writing, they need to be personally experienced. So take the risk and opportunity of a lifetime and I promise you will not regret it!

“The people of Malawi have taught me that true happiness comes with an open mind, an open heart, and an open soul.”