What kind of activities would a typical day involve?

Each day of the program was different. The first few days we spent settling in and meeting community members. We also visited the U.S. Embassy and met with the Municipal Medical Officer to better understand the main challenges to overcoming Uganda’s current health status. We then began visiting health centers, a malnutrition clinic, a sanitation research center, an HIV/AIDS research center, an integrated farm, and various other sites. Near the end of the program we worked alongside a village-level community organization called the Integrated Center for Agriculture, Nutrition, and Health to help connect everything we had learned the past few weeks and relay that knowledge to members of the village in which we were staying.

Do you feel that you were helpful to the community in your time in Uganda?

While I was in-country, I worked with a family on creating a sack garden, a technique to increase productivity of growing food on small plots of land. I just recently saw pictures taken a year after I was there of the family and the produce that they had grown in their sac gardens. This made the program full circle for me and helped me understand that my experience wasn't over after I left Uganda.

What was one significant cultural difference between your host country or community and Madison?

Gender roles were one significant cultural difference between the United States and the village in Uganda. Anytime we were out in public, women in our group had to wear skirts or shawls that fell below the knee and many women in the community would kneel when meeting men in our group. We were told to expect these differences before we arrived in Uganda, but it still took some time to get used to.

How did this change your thinking about health?

This program had a huge influence on the way I think about community and health. One theme I noticed throughout the program was that the best way of combatting Uganda’s current challenge lies in primary education on food choices, disease prevention, agriculture, sanitation, and sexual health.