Summer 2014:
Olivia Eilers

This past summer, Olivia, a senior Human Development major, spent eight weeks in the beautiful and exciting city of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, immersing herself in the culture and the Spanish language, shadowing a doctor of alternative holistic medicine, taking a class on Participatory Action Research, and learning about the many different facets of global health. Her invaluable experience shadowing Cornell's Dominican partner, Dr. Angel Pichardo, taught her about approaching the health of an individual from every angle possible, and through a series of lectures on topics from the Dominican history and economy to gender inequality, she gained a great deal of insight into the many factors and perspectives that influence an individual's health status. Olivia and her colleagues also worked with La Casa Comunitaria de Justicia to form data on the types of resources available to the community and her experiences and the relationships she formed with members of the community influenced Olivia to investigate further into the topic of gender inequality and the effect it plays on physical and emotional well-being of the individual, the family, and the community as a whole.

Ann Lei

Ann spent the summer of 2014 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, shadowing physicians and medical students in hospitals, clinics, and a holistic health center. The variety of placement locations allowed a more comprehensive insight into the Dominican health care system and exposure to traditional medicine. She also conducted an independent research project investigating the nutritional education and knowledge of health care practitioners. Her interview participants included medical students working in a hospital she was shadowing in as well as medical doctors with diverse educational backgrounds. In addition, Ann and her group partook in a course on qualitative research to assist them with their research projects. Throughout the trip, Ann participated in group retreats to more rural locations and attended educational talks presented by the group's Dominican partners. Furthermore, the group lived with homestay families, giving them the opportunity to fully relish the Dominican culture and lifestyle.
Cassandra Palladino

This past summer, Cassie spent 7 weeks in Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic. This was the first summer that the Global Health Program in Santo Domingo sent students abroad, and it was an amazing start to the program. Cassie completed service placements in el Hospital de Mujeres (Women's Hospital), and ANDA, an alternative health clinic run by Dr. Angel Pichardo. At these service placements, Cassie was able to shadow doctors and assist them in their daily routines, as well as talk with the patients about their treatments. She really delved into the alternative health subject and developed a strong interest in traditional Dominican medicinal practices. Cassie also lived in an incredible home-stay, with and ever-attentive host-mom and host-brother. The community in which Cassie and the rest of the students lived in welcomed everyone with open arms, and they were accepted into the community as daughters. They made sure to teach all of the Cornell girls as much about Dominican culture as possible, and truly eased their integration into the lifestyle of la Republica Dominicana. Cassie had an amazing experience, and cannot wait till the next opportunity arrives to work abroad.

Noemi Plaza

Noemi is a senior majoring in Biology and Society in the College of Arts and Sciences. This summer she participated in the Cornell global health field experience in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. The program partnered with a community holistic health center, where the students were able to take part and learn about alternative healing methods. In addition, she was able to attend and take part in various different talks concerning different aspects of the Dominican health system, public health, and numerous other Dominican social issues. For her service placement, Noemi worked and shadowed in several different medical facilities and hospitals. She spent most of her time in the Santo Domingo Women's hospital, working in the family planning clinic, and in a local primary care clinic close to where she lived in the Simon Bolivar barrio. While working closely with the doctors and patients, Noemi was able to undertake a research project looking into the social causes for adolescent pregnancy in the barrios of Santo Domingo. She spent the summer learning about global health, research methods, and most importantly the wealth of wisdom that came from living life the Dominican way.
Jennifer Zahn

Jennifer spent 8 weeks in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic with the Cornell Global Health program. During those 8 weeks, she stayed with a host-family in a lower income neighborhood, but lived close to the holistic health clinic in which she worked. Throughout her time in the DR, Jenn focused mainly on researching the Dominican diet through recipe trials with the host-families and conducting interviews about the neighborhood’s nutritional behaviors. Through these trials, Jenn was able to cook with each of the 6 families in order to observe what the families cooked, how they cooked the food, what they ate, their knowledge about the food and cooking practices, their cultural and personal values, and the how those factors related to their health conditions. She also volunteered in two service placements within the neighborhood. One placement was the holistic health clinic, ANDA, where she observed and helped treat patients through naturalistic methods for both chronic and curative conditions. Her other placement was in a primary health clinic where she shadowed a doctor, reviewed patient records, and conducted patient interviews about their diet and nutrition to assist her research. Other activities included attending various talks to contextualize their work in several topics and visiting health centers and hospitals throughout the city. Jenn was able to explore various aspects of the country through not only a medical approach, but also a historical, political, cultural, and social lens.