

Kaza, India



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Program: Global Public Health in the Himalayas -
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Major: Health, Society, and Policy

Earning the Career Development Badge:



As someone who wants to become a physician, this trip was particularly eye opening. This experience in India exposed me to the traditional system of Tibetan medicine which consists of traditional healers called "Amchi's." I was able to learn a great deal about their role in serving the needs of

the community. It was interesting to see the combination of western and traditional medicine play out in the villages and how the locals utilize these two forms of medical care. This experience taught me the importance of understanding the patient's background and culture when delivering the best care for them.

Earning the Research Experience Badge:



I learned so many valuable things in Spiti Valley, India, things that I couldn't have learned in a classroom while reading a textbook. I was able to go out into the local community and engage with them. It gave me a first hand look at the local's lifestyle and the public health issues that the community has to deal with on a daily basis. I learned a great deal about the barriers that they have in accessing proper medical care. We looked at barriers such as language, cost, and geographical limitations. We were also able to visit the local Kaza Hospital in person. This allowed us to see the lack of infrastructure, as well as general tools in the hospital. And this

gave us an insight into why the locals were hesitant in using these government facilities.

Transferable Skills:



One of the most important things that I learned was the virtue of patience on this trip. Our goal was to conduct public health surveys in five different villages. We had to go knocking house to house looking for participants. When we finally found a participant, we had to work around three different languages. Our surveys were in english, but our translators weren't fully fluent in english. This meant I had to translate the question from English to Hindi, then they would translate the question from Hindi to the local language, and then the participant would reply in the local language and the cycle would continue. This was extremely frustrating in the beginning as it took us more than an hour to complete one survey. But over time I realized that the number of surveys didn't matter, it was the quality of the surveys that mattered. This experience taught me to be very patient and to listen carefully. I now apply these skills in my school and home life and have noticed a significant improvement when I am communicating with others.



"It's one thing to see a picture of a place and another to be there, to experience it, to be part of it, and to breathe it. I never envisioned myself being on the top of the world at 12,500 feet, but there I was in Spiti Valley, India."