

Where in the world are our Psychology Majors?



Or... more precisely, where have they been? What have they been doing? Increasingly, our majors are taking advantage of opportunities to study, conduct research, and participate in volunteer and community service projects abroad. Take a trip around the world with some of our undergraduates, alumni, and faculty who are learning, teaching, and doing good work across the globe.

Buena Vista, Mexico

Spring in Baja! Sound like a vacation? To be sure, there is no shortage of sun, sand, and the beautiful blue water of the Sea of Cortez. These elements, along with the rugged desert landscape have drawn tourists from the United States and Canada for years now. But, with what impact on the indigenous communities of southern Baja?



Manuel Arambul

Psychology Senior Lecturer **Kim Barrett** and her students have been grappling with this question over the past several spring quarters. The Buena Vista program, run by Comparative History of Ideas (CHID), focuses on the study of racism and cultural psychology, and examines the cultural interface that is created between Mexican communities and tourists when residents of the U.S. and Canada travel to Mexico on vacation.

"I believe strongly that no one should consider their college education complete without taking a few classes on diversity and racism," says Psychology alum **Hong Nguyen** (BS, 2006). "Kim's classes on diversity made my college education more complete," Hong continues, "and having these classes in Mexico, being immersed in another culture, gave us opportunities to discuss

issues that we might not encounter in the States." An important part of the cultural immersion experience for the students is the program's community service component. "I think that it is an unusual and wonderful opportunity to participate in an international study program that affords each student with a feeling of belonging and participation, in addition to the rewards that come with making a contribution to the community in which you live," says program director **Kim Barrett**.

"I met people that I now have life-long bonds with and an experience that I will never forget."

- Manuel Arambul, Psychology Senior

Psychology senior **Manuel Arambul** participated in the Buena Vista program in 2006 and returned in 2007 as an undergraduate teaching assistant. In his first year, Manuel helped a local teacher run a soccer program, and in his second year, collaborated with a fellow student to teach an elementary school art class. "I came back to Buena Vista for many reasons," Manuel remembers, "but mainly it was a very special place for me and I wanted to give more back to the community."

Taking on a leadership role in 2007 allowed Manuel to "feel like I helped the group do greater things for the community and to really leave their mark." The ability to become a part of the local community and to form lasting friendships with fellow students was meaningful for Hong and Manuel. "I was especially attracted to the opportunity to stay in a small town, be a part of the community, and contribute something," recalls Hong. "There's a whole other level of how you bond with people," explains Manuel, "I met people that I now have life-long bonds with and an experience that I will never forget." ■

Tinjil Island, Indonesia

While study abroad is a fantastic opportunity for all undergraduates—opening doors to other cultures, creating world citizens, and resulting in personal growth—for some students, it is integral to their specific area of study. Such is the case for senior psychology major **Nicolle Perisho** who traveled with Research Professor **Randy Kyes** to Tinjil Island,



Nicolle Perisho

Indonesia, to observe long-tailed macaque monkeys in the wild. As an honors student, Nicolole conducts research at the Washington National Primate Research Center on behavioral sex differences among pigtailed macaques.

The International Field Study Program in Indonesia gave Nicolole the opportunity to compare the behaviors of captive and wild macaques. The ability to have both laboratory and field research experiences was important for Nicolole. "By actually conducting field research," says Nicolole, "I experienced the benefits, as well as problems, in a field setting."

Though she had traveled extensively prior to the Tinjil Island program, Nicolole believes that "(the) experience in Indonesia intensified my passion for travel and made me more inclined to pursue travel opportunities in the future." Professor Kyes, who has been conducting the International Field Study Program for almost 15 years, is consistently impressed with our students' performance.

"For many, this is their first time in a developing country and living in jungle conditions," he says. "I am inspired by their excitement and dedication and I believe the program is equally inspirational for them." Clearly, this has been Nicolole's experience. "Studying abroad was a vital aspect to my education in animal behavior," she concludes, "the experience is one that each student should pursue." ■