Hello fellow students,

I want to tell you about an awesome volunteer organization called [Help, Learn and Discover](http://www.ecuaexperience.com). What we do is take university students from universities in the US and Canada to Ecuador to volunteer for one month in the summer. This program offers 3 experiences: HELP, LEARN and DISCOVER.

For the Help component, we fundraise money here and then take those funds to Ecuador to help families in need. Last year we fundraised over $72,000 US and were able to build 20 houses in a rural village called Pallatanga. With funds we had left over, we paid for 10 life-altering surgeries for kids.

We have 3 different programs and they all differ only in the Learn component. In the medical program we shadow doctors through 7 different wards: ER, surgery, internal medicine, pediatrics, ICU, sport’s medicine and radiology. Last year I observed a thyroid glad extraction, pyloric sphincter replacement, and a tumor extraction from the stomach, and the surgeons were able to explain the procedures in English. Asides from a biomedical perspective, I gained an understanding of the social determinants of health that affect populations. For example, Ecuador is a model country to observe the effects of the public and private divide in health systems, and for looking at the gaps in health equity in developing countries.

For the Discover component, we travel around Ecuador and do some cool extreme sports like waterfall repelling, river tubing, surfing and some awesome hikes.

Check out our website where you can find all the relevant information [www.ecuaexperience.com](http://www.ecuaexperience.com).

Also our facebook page has great videos and updates about the program.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Help-Learn-and-Discover/241579321045?ref=ts>

For more information on how to get involved, email me at kskorohodova@ecuaexperience.ec

All the best,

Ksenia Skorohodova