

# CSUCI Nursing Students Venture Peru

## FIRST CLINICAL DAY AT HOSPITAL TUPAC AMARU



UNRAVELING ~55lbs of  
HOSPITAL DONATIONS!  
WE HAVE IMMENSE GRATITUDE  
TO THOSE WHO DONATED!

Items were collected by Maximiliano Nivel,  
a project organization, which  
distributed the donations to  
various clinics in Cusco, Peru.



This summer we embarked on a journey to Cusco, Peru for a medical mission organized by a volunteering program called International Volunteer HQ (IVHQ). Despite having former international volunteers in our group, we were a bevy of nursing students that were captivated by the cultural immersion and Peruvian folklore. Peru has endowed us with insight that we otherwise would have not realized if we were to each venture on our own. Our trip encompassed an array of experiences that had us reveling in new found knowledge, and had brought us home with a deeper understanding of the importance of cultural diversity and cultural competency. In addition to the medical brigade, we got to explore and take part in Peruvian debauchery and hiking galore: from colorful street markets, to the breathtaking Machu Picchu wonder, to decadent Peruvian cuisine, and to fluffy alpacas...We can go on and on depicting our trip and maybe even share how we almost missed our connecting flight, but we want this post to be a focus on our medical experience abroad.



## OBLIGATORY PICTURE IN FRONT OF MACHU PICCHU

Upon our arrival in Cusco, we were immediately greeted with warm hugs by our homestay Josefina, a charming middle-aged lady who provided us shelter and meals throughout the day. There, we were also greeted by other student volunteers whom we quickly befriended, despite racing for shower stalls every morning. We got to experience Cusco together and learned that we were from all over the world! And we soon realized that our projects were just as diverse as ourselves: some students were participating in medical projects like our own, while others took part in construction/development projects, childcare programs, and animal shelter projects.



## IVHQ VOLUNTEERS EXPLORING THE CITY OF CUSCO TOGETHER

During our first day, we took a thirty-minute bus ride--more like a reality version of Mario Kart--and were oriented to our outpatient clinic, Hospital Tupac Amaru. The following days we were either on our own or in groups, and got to volunteer in the clinic's adult triage center, laboratory, trauma center, pediatric triage, women's health, and immunization center. We assisted with vaccinations, took vital signs, educated patients, and witnessed intriguing cases (e.g. a toddler with polydactyly). To say the least, our experience there was eye opening. Hospital Tupac Amaru relied on paper charting, and compared to what we're used to back in the US it was quite evident that there was a lack of resources and stewardship: there was a lack of alcohol wipes, insufficient access to antiseptic hygiene, lack of wound care products, patients who waited in the same room where physical examinations took place, lack of stethoscopes, etc. Initially, we were a little bewildered to the idea of using the same manual blood pressure cuff with every sick patient we encountered, and reusing glass thermometers that were wiped with a mere cotton ball. Although we felt that there was a dire need of lending a hand, this was more than just an onus to us nursing students; the stark contrast of seeing many smiling faces by the Peruvian people had us questioning our role, our intention, and our purpose of volunteering: who's to say that these people needed our help or to even question their standards of practice? Was our wanting to volunteer abroad vacuous in nature?



Upon reflection—even with this—in our immersing into this culture, it was truly a privilege to be exploring Peru and to learn about their healthcare practices. Our initial stance of what constituted “standards” of hygiene and sanitation varied and—dare we say—did not matter. Hospital Tupac Amaru taught us that there are many approaches to life and that with limited resources this is sometimes the best care that can be offered for these communities. It was a test of our adaptability, our ability to be cognizant of ethnocentric thinking, our grit, and our resilience. This experience challenged the very nursing concepts we’ve learned like safety and implementation of evidence-based practice, but often in countries like Peru these notions become quite elusive relative to the conventional “US sense” for reasons beyond their (Peru) control; the practices demonstrated in Hospital Tupac Amaru is ever so prevalent among clinics in Peru and is the sheer reality.

With that said, volunteering here left a lasting impression on all of us. Amid the language barriers, altitude sickness, and differing standards of medical practice, we all developed a deeper sense of the world we live in, a broader perception of global health, and an emboldened self to contribute positive changes in our world.



## TRYING ON TRADITIONAL PERUVIAN CLOTHING WITH NEW FRIENDS



# MEET THE VOLUNTEERS



**Aira Matias**



**Kristian Dadacay**



**Darise Rodriguez**



**Jossimar Tapia**



**Sarah Tiffin**