

Planting Hope Occupational Therapy Service Learning Study Abroad Program

The Planting Hope Service Learning Program is provided through collaboration between UNM Occupational Therapy Graduate Program and Planting Hope in Nicaragua. Planting Hope has a long relationship with the San Ramon community, including assistance in building a library, computer lab and a rehab center and has hosted many eco-tourism and university volunteer groups. However, we are the first service learning program for clinical and community health professions.

The UNM Occupational Therapy Graduate program aims to establish an on-going partnership to allow for training, education, and development of resources for children with disabilities and their families that live in the region. Therefore, a public health approach will be taken to determine key issues/concerns of residents, consider barriers and limitations, set objectives for programming, and implementation of program activities.

During this public health clinical experience, Occupational Therapy graduate students will work under faculty supervision, to complete the following outcomes:

1. Assessment of children identified through the partner sites
2. Intervention suggestions will be provided to families and identified staff
3. Staffing and educational in-services will be held with identified staff from partner sites
4. Parent training and education sessions will be held with caregivers of children identified
5. OTGP students will work with each to set up the center to create an environment conducive to the needs of the children identified.
6. Home visits within surrounding community to determine needs of these families and children.
7. Goal setting workshop to be held with identified stakeholders aimed at determining top priority objectives for long term collaboration.

In addition, students will have the opportunity for cultural exchange and to broaden their understanding of life through the following:

1. Learning Folkloric and Traditional dancing
2. Experiencing and preparing Nicaraguan meals
3. Following the coffee process from farm to exportation
4. Playing soccer, baseball or other games with community members and school children
5. Creaking natural fiber recycled paper with a local women's group
6. Working with a local grassroots movement to organize a family workshop
7. Homestay with a local family

