

Jeanna Auriemma, '07

## Marigat, Kenya

I spent my summer with Caitlyn Munson and Sheena Tonkin in Marigat, Kenya at the Marigat Catholic Mission. We lived in a convent with three Franciscan Missionary Sisters- Sister Martina, Sister Madrine, and Sister Joan. Our living quarters could not have been more comfortable for the area where we were staying. Each of us had our own room and we did have indoor plumbing in the evenings and at night when we were not working.



*This is everyone that worked at the clinic with us. Sister Martina, the head of the clinic, is in front.*

We worked both in a medical clinic on the compound and on a mobile clinic. Three days a week, we stayed on the compound and worked at the clinic for pregnant women and young children. We weighed the patients, took blood pressures, and learned how to fill out their medical charts and immunization histories. We also spent some time in the examination room, learning to give pregnant women examinations without the use of advanced technology such as sonograms. At times, we assisted the lab technician and observed blood tests and different disease screenings using a single, old-fashioned microscope that was the most advanced technology at the clinic. We also attended to the sick patients who visited the clinic on these days.



*Taking blood pressure at the clinic*

On mobile clinic, two days a week, we traveled up to two hours away and set up areas for prenatal exams in neighboring villages. We also visited schools to give children medicine against worms. One of my favorite parts of the trip was home visiting, where we walked to different patients' homes who were too sick or physically unable to make regular trips to the clinic. We visited many AIDS patients and were able to learn the personal stories which were both difficult and inspiring. In addition, we visited a refugee camp and were able to speak with some of Marigat's poorest villagers.



*This is our truck that we rode in for mobile clinics. We often gave villagers rides as the Marigat Mission had on of the few cars in the entire town.*



*We are at a local primary/secondary school giving the children medicine against worms*

On days off from clinic work, we enjoyed sight-seeing. We were able to visit a national park and neighboring provincial towns. We also enjoyed learning about Kenyan culture. Sister Martina taught us to make some traditional Kenyan dishes, such as chapatti and mandazi pastries. In return, we taught them how to make sugar cookies and French toast with the limited food supplies that we had. We prepared dinner on most nights for



ourselves and the Sisters. We were able to learn traditional African dances by attending church services as well as learning about African-style Catholic masses.



*Sight seeing! Some of the gorgeous hot springs outside of Marigat*

Four young schoolgirls came over once a week to perform Kenyan dances, poetry, and songs for us. They also gave us Kiswahili lessons. Interacting with the children was probably one of my favorite memories from the trip. Three young orphaned boys visited the convent at lunch time, and we had fun coloring and blowing bubbles with them.



*Our teachers! These girls gave us Kiswahili lessons*



*Robert, Anton, and David enjoying the coloring books and crayons we brought over.*

Overall, I really enjoyed my trip to Kenya. Although it was difficult to see people living “in poverty”, I’ve learned the difference between living simply and being “poor”. Instead of feeling bad for the villagers I met, I instead have great respect for their ability to survive and be happy without all the excessive materialistic needs that we’re used to.



*A typical home of a Marigat villager- made of mud, sticks, and paper.*