

Caitlyn Munson, '07

Marigat, Kenya

My summer of service trip was to Marigat, Kenya. I went with Sheena Tonkin and Jeanna Auriemma. The town of Marigat was small and rural, and I learned a lot from being in the entirely different culture.



These are the women we lived with: Sisters Medrine, Joan and Martina

While in Kenya, we stayed with Franciscan sisters. These women graciously opened their home to us. Sister Martina basically ran the clinic that we worked in. She is the person that I miss the most – she was an amazing person, and a lot of fun as well. Sister Joan was originally from England, and had been living in Kenya for 56 years! She worked in the school on the compound. Sister Medrine spent most of her time working away from the convent, so I unfortunately did not get to know her as well as the others.



Here we are with the crew that ran the clinic. From the left: Peter (the driver), Sobet (a nurse), me, Jane (a nurse), Sheena, Jeanna, and Richard (the lab tech).

We also worked with some amazing people at the clinic. The clinic that we worked in mainly served pregnant women and infants. The women came for routine check-ups, and many of the infants came for immunizations. On occasion, we also served people who were ill. There were two nurses in the clinic: Sobet and Jane. Sobet did the majority of the examinations on the pregnant women, while Jane mainly handled immunizations and vitamins. There was also Richard, who ran the lab. Peter was the man who drove us around, and he also helped out with odd jobs around the clinic. Each person on the clinic team played a very important role.



Here are some shots of me working at the clinic. On the left, I am weighing a baby on a produce scale. On the right, I am taking the blood pressure of a pregnant woman.

We had three main tasks at the clinic. The first thing we did was maintain records. We had to keep track of everyone who came in, and if the person did not have any records, we created a new card for them. We also weighed the babies that came in. We did this using a produce scale and a sling. Finally, we took the blood pressures of the women who came into the clinic. It was amazing to see the difference in blood pressures in Kenyan women and American women. In Kenya, the highest blood pressure that we recorded was about 120/80, and that was in a pregnant woman!



Here is Sheena and I distributing anti-worm pills at a school. This was one of the things we did on mobile clinic.

We also were involved in mobile clinic. Two days each week, we would pack up all of our supplies and set up the clinic in a town far from Marigat. Sometimes the drive could be two hours, but this provided care to as many people as possible. We also went to schools on mobile clinic. On these trips, we provided anti-worm medication to the children and teachers at the schools. This was always an interesting experience because many of the children had not seen “mzungus” before. We were always the center of the children’s attention because they were so interested to see someone with white skin.



These are three orphans that used to come and play at the convent. From the left: Peter, David, and Anton.

The three orphans that inhabited the hallway of the convent every afternoon are three of the people who touched me the most. Peter was a young boy who was around 9 years old – there was no record of his birth, and he did not really know his true age. Anton and David were brothers. These boys lost their parents to AIDS. Anton, who was 13, was HIV positive and was often very sick. David was only 6, and was not HIV positive. These boys used to love to come and play with the crayons, bouncy balls, and bubbles that we brought them. Their stories were heart breaking, but I have never met three more energetic kids!



This is me holding a baby – my personal project was to bring baby clothes to donate.

Something I personally did before going to Kenya was raise baby clothes through my local Curves. People were very generous, and I was able to bring many little outfits for the babies in Kenya. Distributing the clothes was a lot of fun because I got to hold and dress a lot of cute babies!

My summer of service is a trip I will never forget. The people I met, places I saw, and experiences I had will always be a part of me.