



## **Melissa Martelly**

Associate of Science in Nursing 2004

Bachelor of Science in Nursing 2006

Attended a Workshop and Volunteered for the International Peace and Conflict Resolution at the University of Arusha 2007-2009

### **Why did you choose to do this experience?**

This was an internship requirement to complete my Master degree in International Peace and Conflict Resolution with a concentration in Global Health.

### **What are the benefits of doing this experience?**

The benefits included getting an opportunity to teach medical surgical nursing at the University of Arusha, something I would not have been able to do in the United States because I currently have a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. While I was in Arusha, I was also able to attend three international conferences that were sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the African Union and the United Nations.

Another benefit of this experience was the opportunity to live in a completely different and sometimes challenging environment where you are forced to adapt and adjust to your new surroundings. I loved learning about a new culture, a new language, and being able to pass on my knowledge and capabilities to others so that they can make their own impact on the field of nursing and beyond.

### **How has the experience enhanced your academic experience or shaped your career goals?**

As a result of my time in Tanzania, I don't have a doubt in my mind that I will be living and working abroad, even if it is for a short time in the near future. Secondly, this experience helped clarify my career goals. I now know that I would like to pursue career options within education and teaching because of the three months I spent teaching during this experience.

### **Describe any exciting projects or responsibilities that you've worked on during your experience?**

I had the opportunity to attend an expert meeting on the improved interaction between the African peer review mechanism (APRM) and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Both organizations evaluate the human rights records of each country and assess their progress and challenges they may be facing. The recommendations are then given to each country on how they can improve human rights issues.

I was able to present the research I had conducted and assisted my professor with on millennium development goals to a room full of human rights experts and diplomats from all over the world. I also participated in the drafting committee for this meeting and served as a facilitator for the working group discussions. A classmate of mine and I ended up drafting the summary document of the meeting and the

recommendations made that will eventually be published by the United Nations and possibly be used to draft policy for the African Union and the United Nations.

**Was there anything unique about your experience that you can share with us?**

While working at the University of Arusha, I visited a children's orphanage on campus twice a week for my five months in Tanzania. I primarily participated in recreational activities with the kids. To see them smile whenever I came around to play with them was a really humbling feeling because all they wanted to do was play despite everything they had been through.

The second thing that was unique about my experience was the wonderful hospitality that I was treated to wherever I went, whether it was in Tanzania, Kenya or Rwanda. Colleagues, coworkers and people that I would meet from all walks of life would open their homes to me, allowing me to meet their families and hear their stories over a communal meal or whatever they had to offer, even if it was nothing. By the end of my five months within East Africa, I truly felt at home as I allowed myself to embrace the culture and this new way of life that I had transitioned into and for that I will be forever grateful.

**What advice would you give to other students who may be considering a similar experience?**

Be yourself, be self-reliant, but also be willing to learn from those around you. Embrace your new surroundings and take in as much as you can of the culture and way of life. Try to leave as big of an impact on others as they leave on you. Lastly, don't put any expectations on the experience, take it one day at a time and watch what happens.