Dr. Miller’s Thoughts on the Siena/AMC Program

Twenty-six years ago, Dr. Alan Miller, associate dean at AMC, and Ed LaRow, Ph.D., were given the chance to design a new medical program.

The first decision made was the easiest: the students in the program would spend four years at Siena College. This would give students a chance to explore and clearly discern the call to be a doctor.

The students chosen for the program had to show that they had a deep value system in their lives. Dr. Miller wanted the students who would become doctors to truly care for their patients.

After identifying these unique students year after year, Dr. Miller is pleased with the results. “In my opinion, it has resulted in a succession of amazing classes. The faculty at Albany Med can quickly identify the students who came from Siena. They have done extremely well in the medical school, not only by performing well academically, but also their role in the life of the student body.”

When the program was initiated, two Summers of Service were added to the curriculum. Dr. Miller credits Ed LaRow, Ph.D. for this addition. They believed that students should experience medicine somewhere else in the world. The students should see the extreme conditions that other people live in, as well as how doctors in other countries treat their patients. This aspect of the program really flourished because the students come back with full hearts and a new appreciation for the small things in life.

Dr. Miller also notes that one of the greatest benefits of the program is one that was not expected. The students in the program became a family. They are a strong support system for each other and their friendships last longer than the eight years they are studying together.

The effort to educate doctors who care for their patients is evidenced in the 172 doctors who have graduated from the program. Many go into primary care, where they have the continuity of being with someone longer than a day. In the words of Dr. Miller, “there is an intimate, trusting relationship between a patient and his doctor where the benefit is really only for one person.” The Siena/AMC program has realized Dr. Miller’s hopes and exceeded his expectations.

Siena Class of 2013 Summer of Service Sites

Michael Ashamalla ’13 and Stefanie Sueda ’13 volunteered with the Mill Hill Sisters at the Marigat Catholic Mission in Marigat, Kenya.

Kathryn Williams ’13 and Antony Mathew ’13 volunteered in a mission clinic in Salawa, Kenya, a neighboring village to Marigat.

Rani Berry ’13, Daniel Lee ’13 and Tina Ramineni ’13 worked with the Missionaries of Charity, the order of nuns founded by Blessed Mother Teresa, in Calcutta, India.

Joshua Mellor ’13 and Kaitlyn Siegel ’13 worked in the Mada Clinics in Maventibao, Madagascar.

Lori Tantlinger ’13 volunteered in Cusco, Peru, working in a hospital ward and a children’s clinic.

Alyssa Herrmann ’13 and Amanda Tashjian ’13 volunteered at the Francis Xavier Orphanage in Petite Riviere de Artibonite, Haiti.

Dylan Lee ’13 mentored children, many of whom are AIDS orphans, at the Bernard Nordcamp Center in Windhoek, Namibia.

Nicole Andrews ’13 volunteered with Catholic Charities at Farano House and at Heery Center in Albany, New York.
AMC Class of 2012 Residencies

Karina Davis '12
Krzysztof Dzrymski '12
Victoria Fernandes '12
Taylor Kahne '12
Patrick Marinello '12
Amy Mathew '12
Ryan McIntyre '12
Joshua Morra '12, Ph.D.
Kristin Navarette '12
Heather Petrav '12
Alexander Riccio '12
Aman Shah '12
Sheena Tonkin '12

Psychiatry
Medicine
Medicine
Anesthesiology
Orthopaedic Surgery
Emergency Medicine
General Surgery
Psychiatry
Pediatrics
Pediatrics
Neurological Surgery
Medicine
Medicine
Pediatrics

University of Michigan Hospitals, Ann Arbor, MI
Lahey Clinic, Burlington, MA
Madigan Army Medical Center, Tacoma, WA
University of Chicago Medical Center, Chicago, IL
Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland, OH
Staten Island University Hospital, Staten Island, NY
Monmouth Medical Center, Long Branch, NJ
University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Pittsburgh, PA
Albany Medical Center, Albany, NY
Albany Medical Center, Albany, NY
Albany Medical Center, Albany, NY
Einstein/Montefiore Medical Center, Bronx, NY
Eastern Virginia Medical School, Norfolk, VA

Bike and Build Across the USA

By Meghan Yi '12

This summer, I biked across the USA with Bike and Build. As part of one of its eight cross country trips this summer, I biked from Jacksonville, Florida to Monterey, California to raise awareness and money for the affordable housing cause. We biked 4,029 miles, worked for 80 hours over 17 build days with affordable housing groups throughout the country.

My trip was the Southern United States route, and most of our build days were focused on the restoration of the Gulf Coast, which is still recovering from Hurricane Katrina. On the build days with Habitat for Humanity, Rebuilding Together, and local organizations, I did everything from painting, caulkling, framing, roofing, sodding to vinyl and ceramic tiling. I’m pretty handy now! It was also amazing to get to see the country in a unique way. We got to visit the Grand Canyon, Yosemite, Four Corners, Monument Valley and a Navajo Reservation.

At each city we stopped in, we raised awareness for the affordable housing cause by giving presentations at local schools and churches. We biked with affordable housing and bike safety, hosting bike clinics for children and families who could not afford their homes. I am motivated to try and make the world a better place using my God-given gifts because I know I’ve been blessed with so much.
Kolkata: The City of Joy

By Rani Berry ’13

In the first two days in Kolkata I had personally experienced the infamous words “for it is in giving that we receive.” Throughout my time in India, I replayed these words in my heart.

Our mornings began at 6:30 a.m. when Tina Ramineni ’13, Daniel Lee ’13 and I would drowsily work around each other in our one room living space to shower, brush our teeth and load up on sun screen and mosquito repellent.

Following breakfast from a nearby convenience store, volunteers and sisters would stand in prayer, sing a farewell song to those volunteers whose last day it was and separate onto different public buses to the various service sites.

Initially Tina and I started our mornings at Prem Dan, a woman’s service center, located in the heart of the slums, which we reached by walking through people’s "homes" made of trash bags, newspapers and bounded wood. What surprised me most was the character in each these abodes, decorated with small temples, vibrant colors and the sounds of jingling anklets as babies ran in and out of neighboring shelters.

The children were cute and aware of it. Forced by their harsh upbringings and familiarity with volunteers, they often attempted pick pocketing or cunningly appealing to our conscience as we walked to the Prem Dan site. My first time at Prem Dan left me feeling guilty and helpless; our cure for women my mother’s age was emotionally new for me. At first I found it difficult to help feed, clothe and change women who had been left with such debilitating conditions all alone. This all changed when I realized that the virtues of integrity, compassion, respect, honesty and love surpass age, culture and language barriers. I learned to break through language barriers through a bottle of nail polish and the universal ability to dance to a beat. I was trying too hard to care for these women in the "right" way that it took me time to see that they loved me and were trying to make me feel at home and happy the whole time. After Prem Dan, Tina and I met up with Dan who worked at Kalighat, a nearby service site known in English as "The House of the Dying."

The three of us ventured through the city before heading to our second service site, which would soon become our second home, Daya Dan, a three-story building located down a small dirt alleyway and the entrance is so small that if you aren’t paying attention you may just over look it—which our tuk-tuk drivers often did! Once we arrived, we would rush over to our boys and fill the afternoon hours playing music, blowing bubbles, drinking chai or running around the terrace with our babies.

Soon it became clear that by splitting our time between Prem Dan and Daya Dan there was simply not enough time to get to know the children or the women we worked with. So after much deliberation, we decided to focus on the boys we were so attached to, and for the following eight weeks we stayed at Daya Dan both in the morning and afternoon.

When I think of Kolkata I can’t find a simple way to tell my stories or the stories of the people I’ve met. It would take too many pages to share all the special moments I had with the boys of Daya Dan, the patients at the dispensary, the women of Prem Dan, the many locals and all my fellow volunteers who touched my heart. I will never forget my time in Kolkata, the incessant honking and bumpy car rides combined with Rama’s smile and Bernard’s laugh that together make up the vibrancy of the city. I think I’ll always crave the egg rolls and lassis that we would eat in between our service, and I will forever appreciate, what prior to India, were seemingly small things in life: air conditioning, a granola bar, clean air, clean shoes, electricity, water, law and order and a house to come home to.

India showed me levels of poverty that I haven’t seen before, but it also showed me that happiness is not directly proportional to the amount of money we have. Happiness is a manifestation of our interactions with others and ultimately comes from our service to our fellow brothers and sisters.
PROGRAM EVENTS

Summer of Service in Petite Rivere de Artibonite, Haiti
Student Activity Leadership Team Meeting

Albany Medical College Class of 2016
Summer of Service in Maventibao, Madagascar

Annual Freshman-Sophomore Dinner

Siena College
Albany Medical College Program
c/o Siena College Admissions Office
515 Loudon Road
Loudonville, NY 12211

We want to hear from you!
To submit information for publishing or to receive this newsletter electronically, please contact Ed LaRow
larow@siena.edu