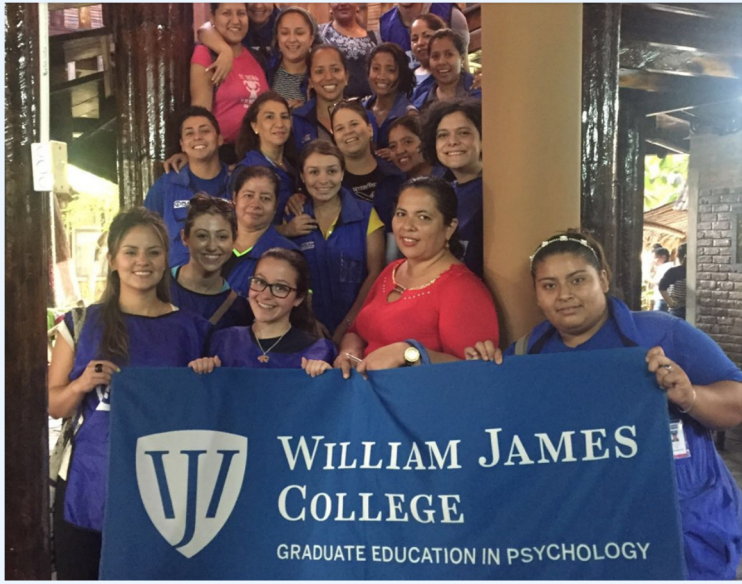


Summer Immersion Program Highlights - Ecuador 2016



The Latino Mental Health Program (LMHP) at William James College (WJC) was founded in the memory of Dr. Cynthia Lucero, a graduate of WJC. Each summer, LMHP students and faculty members travel to Ecuador for a month-long summer immersion experience.

In the summer of 2016, a team of nine LMHP students received a warm welcome from Dr. Lucero's parents upon their arrival. "Having the opportunity to connect with Mr. and Mrs. Lucero in the city they call home was remarkable," said Cassandra Guercia, a 2nd year Clinical PsyD student. "The passion they have to continue the mission of their beloved daughter, Cynthia, is so powerful, and experiencing this firsthand reminded me why I chose to be in LMHP."



Eight WJC students (Natalia Sofia Alves, Estefania Diaz Berrios, Cassandra Guercia, Lynwood McCassie, Michelle Michaels, Yayci Patino, Daniela Perez, Anita Tapia), **one faculty member** (Dr. Paola Michelle Contreras), and **one student TA** (Joselyn Rondón) participated in the 2016 Ecuador Service Learning & Cultural Immersion Program.

During the summer immersion program, students stayed with host families in the community, took Spanish classes to increase their level of Spanish language fluency, and worked at field placement sites that served Latino patients.



Supervised by local psychologists, WJC students conducted clinical rotations at three sites. They worked with families affected by HIV at Fundación VIHDA, collaborated with educational psychologists at Colegio Mercantil (a K-12 private school), and worked with Clinical Psychologists and Psychology interns to provide services to mothers and their newborns at Hospital Gineco-Obstétrico Enrique C. Sotomayor, one of the largest maternity hospitals in Latin America.

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In addition to their clinical rotations, the LMHP team participated in disaster relief efforts in response to the earthquake that devastated the Manabí region in April 2016. Dr. Paola Michelle Contreras, a faculty member in the Counseling Department at WJC, delivered a conference at the Universidad de Guayaquil on vicarious trauma and its impact on first responders. A workshop was conducted on the evaluation of sexual abuse in a post-disaster setting. LMHP students worked with Fábricas de Inteligencia, in collaboration with Plan International and 40 local volunteers, to provide psychoeducational and resilience building interventions to over 2,000 children affected by the earthquake.

"Working with families in Manta truly helped me understand what it means to be immersed in the Latino culture," explained Natalie Sofia Alves, a 2nd year student in the Counseling Department. "Seeing the resiliency of people who lost so much and still managed to be so happy, united, and hopeful, inspired me. This was an emotional experience for which I will forever be grateful."

LMHP students will travel to Ecuador again in August 2017 to increase their cultural competency when addressing the unique needs of Latino patients. "Looking back at my experience in Ecuador," reflected Daniela Perez, a 2nd year student in the Clinical PsyD Program, "I feel grateful to have had an opportunity where I felt immersed in a culture, felt welcomed by its people, and also created memories that will last me a lifetime."

Immersion programs are an important component of concentrations offered through the Center for Multicultural and Global Mental Health.

To learn more about CMGMH concentrations and cultural immersion programs, visit www.williamjames.edu/cmgmh or email cmgmh@williamjames.edu.

Student Spotlight: Krizia Vinck

Krizia Vinck, a 4th year student in the Clinical PsyD Program and LMHP, was recognized at the Massachusetts Psychological Association's (MPA) annual meeting. Her poster, entitled *Drawing Data from the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being II (NSCAW-II)*, was selected as one of the top three best student posters by MPA. "This study explored the differences between the cognitive, academic, and behavioral functioning of U.S. and foreign-born Hispanic children with histories of maltreatment," Vinck explained. "We found no significant differences in cognitive and academic functioning between the two groups. However, U.S.-born children experienced significantly more sleep problems, attention problems, and aggression problems than foreign-born Hispanic children. It was an honor to be recognized by the Massachusetts Psychological Association."

