

# A Summer of Purpose IV's in Venezuela



Sarah Gowan, Catherine Bethea, and Mary Allison Joseph lived in Venezuela this past summer, working with Francisco Mendoza in the Andean community of Carorita. While sharing a lot of experiences, they each have their own reflections on their summer in Venezuela.

I am currently a biology major at Wofford College with hopes of attending medical school. Therefore, my focus while I was in Carorita was to work with Francisco Mendoza in the medical clinic that he established. Being able to work with patients daily, I was able to step out of the shadows and help people with my own two hands. I felt a strong connection with each patient as I held their hand, looked into their eyes, and listened to their list of symptoms and ailments. The experience of working with each patient touched me in a special way and confirmed my ongoing desire to become a doctor. After this experience, I decided that I would plan to make regular medical mission trips to developing countries.

-Sarah Gowan

It is hard to summarize a summer, an experience that was different than any others of my life, into a paragraph and so I shall focus upon the things I learned while having the pleasure of being in Carorita, Venezuela. I learned that God is the same God throughout the world and He manifests Himself to His people in remarkable ways no matter where you may be. I learned the true meaning of what it is to be a family and especially what it is to be a neighbor. Seeing neighbors reaching out to help others, sharing, and pulling together no matter the cause gave me a better appreciation of an attitude of service. But despite all the many lessons, the months with the people of Carorita taught me to have a broader world perspective and to trust that where a community of believers is gathered, God's hand is surely there, no matter the location or the circumstances.

-Catherine Bethea

Most of my work in Venezuela centered on helping host missionary teams from the United States, whether that involved cooking, cleaning, translating, or helping out with the teams' projects. However, while I learned much from these activities, I feel that God most revealed himself to me through my interactions with the people of Carorita. God truly taught me what it is to be in relationships with others. What I most learned from the relationships I formed has to do with how God redefined my understanding of servanthood this summer. I believe that to be a servant to others requires living among those you are serving, forming relationships with them in which you are equals, and giving up your self totally for the sake of God's glory and that other person. Lastly, my experiences in Venezuela reaffirmed my belief that we, as God's children, are all called to a lifetime of servanthood.

-Mary Allison Joseph

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