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This past summer, I spent four weeks in Riobamba, the capital of the province of Chimborazo in the central Ecuadorian Andes, approximately four hours away from country's capital, Quito. Riobamba is a charming city of approximately 100,000 inhabitants, where the colonial and indigenous flavors have not yet been completely overwhelmed by western culture. The program consisted of a one-week training session on taking patient histories, daily medical Spanish classes (~4 students per class), and working at the clinics and hospitals.

We had the opportunity to rotate through several clinical sites during our stay, including a children's hospital, a hospital for patients with insurance, and a free clinic for the indigenous population of a community called Cacha. Twenty minutes outside of Riobamba, Cacha is home to about 3,000 individuals who lack access to a regular physician, running water, and electricity. At the clinics in Cacha, we had the opportunity to assist the doctors in retrieving patient histories, conducting physical exams, and writing prescriptions. The doctors were very welcoming and eager to teach and include us in rounds, discussions, and insightful conversations. We saw a wide range of conditions from pneumonia and rotavirus to varicella and a ruptured appendix. One of the most rewarding moments of the trip was when we gave the children goody-bags of soaps, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and shampoo (made possible by our bake sale at RWJ and donations from our families). Along with the hygiene products, we were also able to purchase a nebulizer for the clinic in Cacha.

While I lived in Riobamba with a host family during the week, on the weekends we had the opportunity to travel extensively and explore the rest of Ecuador- the Galapagos Islands, Quito, Banos, and the Amazon Rainforest. With limited prior knowledge of Spanish, I was surprised at how much I learned in the four weeks. While I can understand way more than I can speak, I learned enough to be able to carry on a conversation and retrieve a patient history in a clinic. Not only did this experience allow me to get a glimpse of cross-cultural forms of medicine and a unique health care system, but it was certainly a very humbling experience. I would *definitely* recommend this program to anyone looking for a solid medical experience with a taste of Ecuadorian culture. What I liked most about the program was the warm culture of Riobamba, the accommodating nature of the program directors, and the fellow students who certainly made the trip unforgettable.

