



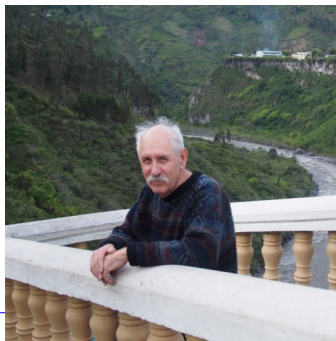
Centro de Rehabilitación, Educación, Capacitación Estudios y Recursos, Inc.



Letter from the director

Elaine Keane MS, OTR/L

Many people think spending time in Ecuador would be a time of living at a slower pace. That has not been the case for those of us involved with CRECER. Between groups coming for service trips and individuals coming to complete their clinical hours, the fast pace that started in March just keeps going. Melissa Matthew finished her 8 week rotation May 10th. I took two weeks off between her departure and the arrival of the next students to spend some time with my husband, Richard Maslow. We did a bit of traveling with friends and a few days relaxing in Ibarra.



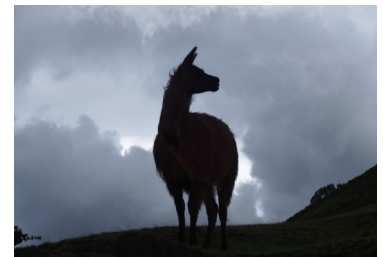
Then things picked up again with the arrival of four students on May 24th.



As the Director of CRECER I find that in addition to being a supervisor for their clinical experience I also act as tour guide and at times mother. I get to hear some of their first words in Spanish. I watch them taking steps out into the city on their own. I share their pride when they take a bus or taxi without me for the first time. I get to listen for

the door when they come home at night.

A typical clinical supervisor will spend six to eight hours a day with students. Due to the unique nature of this fieldwork experience I need to be available 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Not all that time is spent in line of sight of the students but I am always aware of where they are and am available by cellphone, Facebook message or a knock on the door. Outside of the clinic time with the students, I spend time looking for cultural activities and interesting places to visit. I help arrange transportation and frequently accompany them on weekend activities. I show them the way to my favorite ice cream place, where to buy fresh bread and roasted chicken. I try to help them learn something about this country that has become my second home.



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Reflections from Susy Albuja Program

Translated by Elaine Keane



It is gratifying to once again write about the experiences that I have with each one of the students who come to Ecuador to complete their clinical work and to volunteer with CRECER in Ibarra. Now comes the time for me to talk about another group of students. Each one is willing to give her all, not only in volunteering her professional service but in giving of herself on a personal level. Each young woman has a distinct personality, but together they make a homogenous group that results in the good and betterment of them all. These young women explore everything, including the culture, food, customs, etc. They find the positive in all of life. They have dedicated themselves voluntarily and above all they are open to the changes. These changes are good for their growth. They go forward with an enthusiasm that will carry them far in their lives. For myself, another volunteer with CRECER, I am very satisfied to be able to have this opportunity of watching these girls as mother and director at the same time. These two combinations have given me pleasant experiences with these young women.



Teambuilding

Having an OTR student along with the three of us OTA students, we've learned how important team building is inside and outside of the clinic. Team building is extremely important in any setting in order to successfully treat patients to the best of our abilities. It is our duty to put as much knowledge into a case in order to provide the best goal oriented interventions for clients. The OTR/OTA relationship is especially important. We assist each other by brainstorming new treatment interventions in order to keep the clients entertained, engaged, and focused on the short and long term goals. Two examples are specific to team building. We are all working together on a new board made out of cardboard to hold a client's iPad, in order for him to successfully use it to aid in reading using a magnification app. Also, we put our thoughts together to implement a new gross motor game of Human Tic-Tac-Toe at Madres Unidas. Acting as a team will benefit us when we return to the U.S. and need to collaborate on an interdisciplinary team.





Katie Henriques

Lenoir Rhyne University

As a traditional Master's level student at Lenoir-Rhyne University I went to my fieldwork coordinator, Dr. Sue Friguglietti, and asked her if it would be possible to complete my Level II fieldwork in Ecuador. My interest was sparked due to the fact that Ecuador is where my husband was born and raised. Having heard from him and other members of his family about how beautiful it is and how nice the people are I really wanted to learn the language and understand the culture even more. Since the connection was made between Dr. Friguglietti and Elaine Keane, in September of 2012, I have been anxiously awaiting. The opportunity to develop cultural awareness and sensitivity first hand that I could carry with me once I become a therapist in the United States was within reach.

Now that I am here in Ecuador I truly understand how different the access to healthcare is from the United States. I feel beyond blessed that I am working with these wonderful people every day who without CRECER would not be receiving occupational therapy services. The care that CRECER provides is unprecedented. The parent reviews, hugs and smiles from kids, and ability to truly be a creative therapist provide more than enough evidence that this fieldwork is the opportunity of a lifetime. My ability to be flexible is one reason why I have fit in so easily. Rarely does anything go according to plan. However, this helps us grow tremendously in every aspect of our lives. In addition, I have developed leadership skills and new found confidence in my practice by collaborating and supervising OTA students throughout my time here. My mission is to make a positive impact for a diverse population regardless of their circumstances. I will help others live with a purpose.



Meet the students

Morghan Snyder

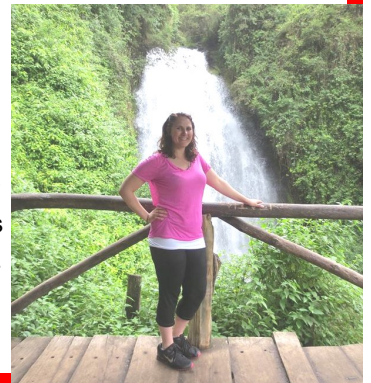


Allegany College of Maryland

I was nervous for my first day at Madres Unidas, and this was mainly because of the language barrier. The staff and clients greeted us with open arms. The language barrier was handled by Elaine and Katie. They translate activities, and that is very beneficial to us. I have only had one other fieldwork rotation in an adult day care facility, and was

excited to learn from this fieldwork. The diagnoses at Madras Unidas vary from client to client. I enjoy coming up with activities for the clients to do for their treatment sessions. The clients recently participated in an activity that involved them gardening, and it was such a wonderful feeling seeing the clients enjoy the activity. One of the clients is assigned to water the plants every day. This brings much joy to him, and he feels like he is contributing to the process of the plants growing.

This fieldwork is different from fieldwork in the United States, but in a good way. The focus here is more on the client, and purposeful activity. The focus is not on productivity or billing, but about making sure clients are receiving the best treatment possible. This is what Occupational Therapy means to me. It's being creative, and coming up with activities that the clients can benefit from. It's refreshing to see that Elaine still focuses on the "old school" Occupational Therapy; that's what makes us different from Physical Therapy.





McKenzie Christopher

Allegany College of Maryland

I'm beyond thankful to have the opportunity to be in Ecuador for my Level II Fieldwork. I have always wanted to volunteer outside of the U.S. however I was never presented with the opportunity until I was accepted into the OTA program at Allegany College of Maryland.

When Elaine came to talk to us about treating in Ecuador, I instantly knew it was what I wanted to do. At the time, Ecuador was a country I knew nothing about, except that it was close to the Equator. Although I had done research in the upcoming months of my trip, Ecuador is not what I expected, it's better! The culture, traditions, and indigenous people continue to amaze me. I particularly like Pan de Yucca and what we call "fancy pants", which are comfortable and colorful pants made by the indigenous people to sell. I've observed that Ecuadorean's are the definition of hard workers. I am constantly striving to learn everything possible about this great country while also recognizing how well off we are in the United States.

This fieldwork rotation is different from my previous U.S. based OT experiences in several ways. The biggest difference is that documentation is not required by outside agencies, we keep records of client visits for to document our treatment and the client response to help in treatment planning and continuity since there are always new students coming to work in the center. In Ecuador, there is no pressure of productivity requirements. With this being said, we can provide our full attention solely on our treatments and intervention plans. In my previous fieldwork rotations, I had not had the chance to work in pediatrics as I do at the CRECER clinic in Ibarra. While working with children is fun and rewarding, it can also be very challenging, in a positive way. I am being forced to be creative with my treatment plans as well as flexible as a future COTA.



Meet the students

Olivia Wolfe

Allegany College of Maryland

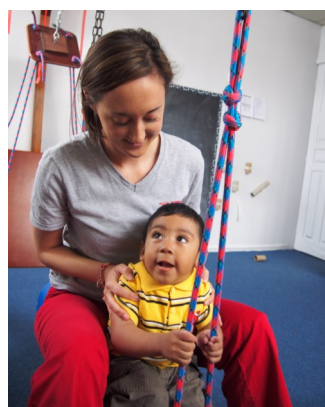
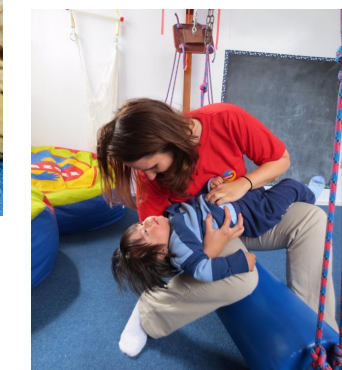
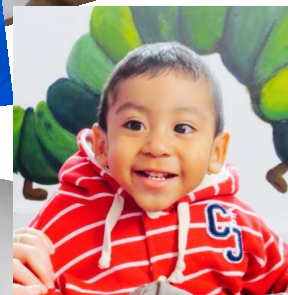


These are just a few of the many reasons why I chose to complete my Fieldwork in Ecuador: the experience of working with people of another culture; getting more experience and learning as much as I can to help me become a better OTA and prepare for my board exam; since I love children, having an opportunity to work with children and others of another culture; getting to see different diagnoses and have more hands-on experiences; get better at understanding and speaking Spanish by having the opportunity to practice communicating in a different language which could be beneficial during my practice as an OTA. I am also

looking forward to helping people in need of therapy, being creative to make therapy fun, and sharing the things I bring with me to help them. Gaining more knowledge through new experiences and opportunities in Ecuador will hopefully expand my abilities and help prepare me for my board exam. I am so grateful for the opportunity to go to Ecuador and explore, experience, and learn new things that will help me to become a better OTA.

It has been a very rewarding experience for me working at CRECER! I'm gaining lots of experience working with pediatrics as well as a variety of diagnoses, not to mention another language and culture! I am also getting the opportunity to help others who are so thankful to receive help and are a delight to work with. Even though things have been challenging at times, it had made me strive to be, and develop into a better person and soon to be COTA!



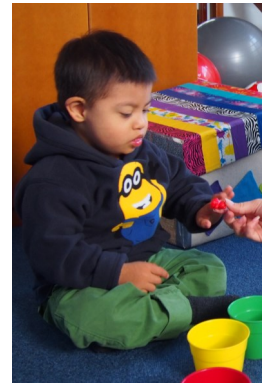


When I first arrived to Ecuador, I was a little anxious and nervous, but mainly excited for this awesome experience. After a few days in Ecuador and spending time at the CRECER clinic, my anxiousness and nerves faded and my excitement increased! Since I didn't know much Spanish, I was interested to see how I would communicate with the clients. If I would even be able to at all. I quickly discovered it wasn't as hard as I thought. Because most clients are young children, not much language was needed to communicate; with the exception of a few key words, which I picked up quickly from hearing them used so frequently. I was able to engage with the clients and lead a treatment session with some assistance. After the first few days, I was no longer nervous and was becoming more comfortable with each of the clients. I have been enjoying the culture here as well, which was a big reason that I wasn't as nervous. Everyone I met was very understanding with my lack of ability to speak their language and were very patient with me which made things much easier and relaxed! Once the pressure of knowing how to speak was taken off by the kindness of others, picking up on the language and learning it was much easier and fun! Some of the clients are a challenge, especially for me since this is the first opportunity I've had to work hands on with young children, but all the clients are unique and so much fun to work with. This experience is great for me because I get challenged to think and put my OT training into practice! Sometimes I'm having so much fun with the clients, I forget that I'm working! This works out well since a child's work is play and that's how they explore their environment and learn. It is very exciting to see the clients making improvements and also how happy their parents are to see it as well! Even more exciting is the fact that I played a role in helping to make a difference and help the clients to reach their goals! (Olivia Wolfe)

The other thing at CRECER that I have enjoyed helping with is the parent support group. I was even more nervous about this because language is definitely needed to communicate with the parents. Everything worked out very well and I quickly learned there was no need to be nervous about this either. I met all of the parents and they all greeted me warmly and went on with the meeting. About a week before the parent support group meeting, the students and I were made aware that some of the parents couldn't come to the meetings because they didn't have anyone to care for their children while they attended. So the other students and I volunteered to watch the children who needed care so their parents could attend. We had fun playing with the children that came and their parents were able to socialize with the other parents and enjoy the support group! (Olivia Wolfe)

CRECER

Outpatient Treatment Center



Fieldwork in Ecuador has been a wonderful experience full of many exciting learning experiences. I have learned so many things about pediatric treatment, how to work with young children, and many useful interventions which will all be helpful for my exam and future work as well. I have grown a lot as an Occupational Therapy Assistant Student here as I get to work with a variety of diagnoses and children, each with their own unique personalities. I have also learned much about the culture here which has been a great experience as well as some eye opening experiences also. Through all the experiences so far, I've learned how to be flexible and find the positive perspective with each experience. I have learned to take each new experience as it comes with a good attitude and learn from each experience. This has not only helped me to grow as an OTA student, but as a person as well!! Another great benefit of living here for nine weeks is the opportunity to submerge myself in Spanish language. I have learned a good bit of Spanish so far, at only 4 weeks of being here, and am excited to continue learning more! In the US, the lifestyle is so fast paced and being on time is very important which is very different from the lifestyle here in Ecuador. This has been another great experience learning how to be flexible, adapt, and slow down which is very nice! As a result of this experience, I have had a wonderful, once in a lifetime experience, and grown so much as an OTA student and a person, and will forever be grateful for it all! (Olivia Wolfe)



Treating in Ecuador is certainly different than treating in the U.S. Volunteering in this setting means we don't have to deal with the pressures of measuring productivity or dealing with insurance reimbursements. This gives us much more time to focus all of our attention and efforts on our clients, which we love! It makes our days less stressful and allows us for productive evenings as well. When we return home for the day we rest, plan future treatments, communicate amongst each other regarding client visits, and we even have time to explore the beautiful culture of Ecuador! A healthy life balance is so important and being in Ecuador has made me realize this. (McKenzie Christopher)

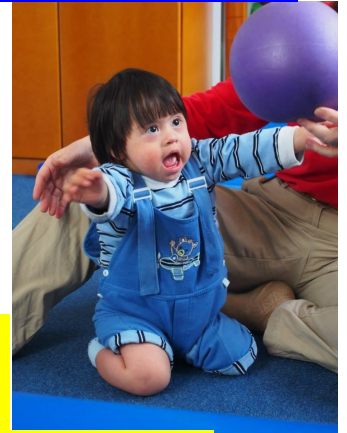


CRECER

Outpatient Treatment Center

What we do

To a non occupational therapist reading this newsletter it may look like all we do is play, but we are doing therapy with these children and they are progressing. Here are just two examples.



Fabio

Last year when we started seeing Fabio he was not able to sit independently. Now we are working on standing balance, trunk control, and fine motor skills.

Angelito

This little guy's name translates to "little angel" and although he doesn't look it, he is almost 4 years old. We just started seeing him a few months ago and he has already made progress. He used to have a strong startle reflex to any movement of his head or any movement toward him. He had no head control and limited ability to play with objects. Now he visually tracks, turns his head from side to side, reaches for and pushes a ball. He has increased head control. He smiles in response to a variety of activities.





Gardening



Adaptive Equipment



FUNHI



Human Tic-Tac-Toe

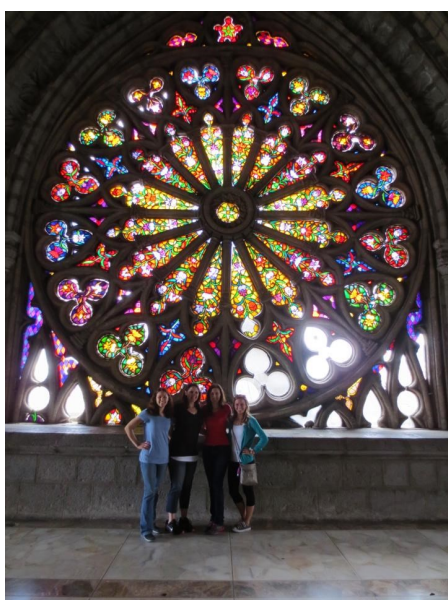


Exploring the culture

Katie Henriques

The people here very much carry tradition with them. This includes taking an extended break for lunch, wearing traditional clothing items, and being very mannerly and respectful in everything they do. Parades are very common here as well. They may be celebrating the founder of a school or a holiday or many other things. Culture is huge part of the experience here and really enhances every moment of the fieldwork learning opportunity.

Not only do we get to work with a very grateful, population every day and continuously improve our Spanish skills but we also get a firsthand look at the culture that is Ecuador. Having the opportunity to explore the beautiful Catholic churches in Quito, hike in and around beautiful waterfalls, learn how agriculture is produced, visit the local markets, and come across cultural routines and habits as we interact daily with the population of Ibarra is more than I could ever imagine a fieldwork would provide.



When the other three students and I visited the exquisite churches in Quito we were in utter awe. They included statues of biblical figures, walls made of gold, views galore, and intricate detail that was created over the many years that it took to design and implement construction. Delving into history of that caliber was incredibly humbling. We were able to see just how much work goes into designing buildings in Ecuador and that they are constructed to last hundreds of years. In addition to the history in the country's capital, Quito, we used the bus and taxi system there and back. This system is a cultural experience in itself. The four of us are from relatively small towns and are not familiar with using taxis or a bus system. We took a taxi to the bus terminal and a bus to and from Quito. Hurry up and wait is a motto that is true to form here. You must have exact change ready at times or be at least ready to pay quickly all the time. But then, the trip may take way longer than expected and you can't ever expect anything to go according to plan. Flexibility is key in this culture.



One of our first weekends here we hiked Peguche Waterfall. Oh my, it was an incredible therapeutic hike. To see the lush landscape of the area and walk in the waterfall was amazing and really helped us to appreciate the natural land of the country. Speaking of beautiful land, when returning from the beach we saw banana trees, rice plantations, yuca plants, corn fields, palm oil trees, etc. It was amazing to see that so much is grown right here that does not require being imported. The food here is so fresh and it shows. Speaking of which, we can get a four course meal for lunch for \$3 at many local restaurants. The family run restaurants are in old houses throughout the city.

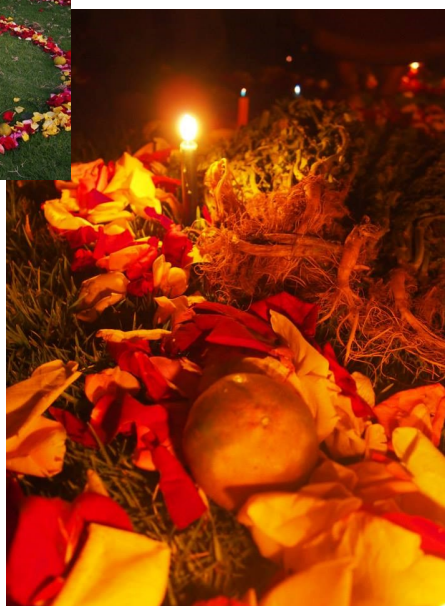
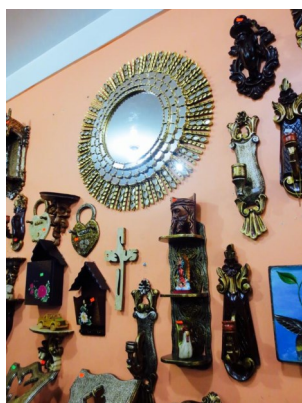


Exploring the culture



Luis Potosi. This, 80 years young, master carver shared a message with us that gave me chills. Your life is a work of art and you can design it however you so please. So be brave, unique, and set apart, a masterpiece, a work of art, living out what you believe, being who you are made to be. This, of course, is just a summary of what he said in Spanish and what I took from it. What is even more important to me is that he has truly taken a meaningful occupation and made it his life's work. That is what occupational therapy originates from: arts and crafts...and as Mary Reilly's quote states, "Man, through the use of his hands, as they are energized by mind and will, can influence the state of his own health". Señor Potosi is so full of zest at 80 years of age and his message helped me to refocus my energy and gain more perspective on this experience. (Katie Henriques)

Summer Solstice Celebration





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What does our logo represent?

The underlying yin-yang sign represents two different forces coming together. These forces can be seen as the people from the US and Ecuador who are working together to build this project. They are represented not as one force greater than the other but as equals and complementary to each other. The hands represent the human element of people reaching out to each other. The colors include the red, white and blue of the US flag and the yellow, blue and red of the Ecuadorian flag. The flag of the city of Ibarra is also red and white. CRECER, the acronym for Centro de Rehabilitación, Educación, Capacitación, Estudios y Recursos, is in the center of the design. The word "crecer" means "to grow" in Spanish.

