

Lives Changed at Home and Around the World

by David Nadeau

Prairie faculty

Courtesy Three Hills *Capital* newspaper

Three leaders, one question, same answer.

Would you go back?

Kevin Peters said, “Tomorrow.” Shannon Weiss said, “Today!” Annette Maningus grinned and said, “When do we leave?”

These Prairie leaders took student ministry teams to Mozambique and the Philippines this summer and, like their students, now face the dauntingly impossible task of trying to compress intense cross-cultural experiences into an emotional package North Americans can understand.

But they would go back, despite the disconnect between living in secure and affluent Three Hills and seeing what the rest of the world does not have.

Mrs. Maningus, her two co-leaders, Cheryl McClim and Ruth Sinclair, and their seven students, will struggle with understanding how Philippine children could possibly thrive in a shantytown landfill or how three generations can live in a cemetery.

No matter the intended purpose of a Prairie summer mission trip—medical, education, or social—it’s children, children, children that surface in every report.

College faculty members Kevin Peters and Shannon Weiss, leaders of separate trips to Mozambique, Africa, echo the children theme: encountering malnourished kids, dying kids, sick kids, little ones with tattered clothes and ragged futures; orphans, near-orphans, and very average two-parent children from strong and loving homes.

Mr. Peters’ nine-student team, co-led by PCAAT faculty members Susan Tipton and Wendy Dafoe and PBC student Jeff Leeder, was staged to facilitate a second year community health practicum. While the students could have done their practicum in North America, Prairie is the only LPN program in Canada with international opportunities.

Miss Weiss' seven-member team of first year PCAAT students did clinic work, observations, and participated in community care in homes.

Not easy in a culture where, as Ms Weiss put it, there is a lot of hopelessness. "We saw many things," she said, "that students do not see in Canada. Things like death caused by AIDS, malnutrition, or malaria. But something Africans have that we don't is a preparedness to spend quality time with you. In Canada, something is always after us; but over there, they are involved with each other and less inclined to focus on things."

Photo cap for PCAAT summer missions trips

A chicken, a goat, and an impoverished child—all living in a three-generation-old Philippine cemetery shantytown. The distance from Three Hills to Africa or the Philippines can best be measured by how students and their leaders respond to such life-changing and life-challenging encounters in the Third World.