



# The paradox of the “City of Joy” Ana Matilde Sainz, BME - Pre-Med , 2022

SERVICE

## SUMMARY

*May 15, 2019 marked the day my life changed by setting a foot on the reality of third world problems. Driven by my pre-med and non-profit management minor, I devoted my complete self, physically and emotionally, solely to the healing of the sick and the dying for a month. Along with the medical staff based in the Houses of the Missionaries of Charity, I was able to channel my my desire to participate in the medical field while assisting the poorest of the poor. This service challenged impotence with action, by providing the most basic medical needs for survival with an extra shot of love and generosity. Moribund, newborns lying on the streets, unassisted pregnant woman, lepers, and shut-ins were the target population of our helping hands. Daily visits to slums, public hospitals and leprosy colonies contributed to the high influx of patients treated.*



## SPICES

*Provided free-of cost medical assistance along with the Non-profit Medical Team based in Prem-Dan and Kalighat. Bathed, fed, and administered meds to the sick and dying that have been rescued from slums, roadsides, trains, among others.*

## HERBS

*Without a doubt this experience parallels all of the aspects that HERBS stand for, as I am sure I donated a piece of myself to every single person I came across during the brigade.*

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

*The lessons I learned in West Bengal directly align with the goals of the Honors College, to be exposed to a different culture and understand a different perspective. To develop and exploit your potential, especially in the field related to your major. In India I gained tremendous patient-care abilities, knowledge on wound healing, how to communicate despite a language barrier.*



## IMPACT

*Kolkata changed me more than what I changed anyone overseas. 30 days later I was able to understand the paradox of this City, which is that within inhumane living conditions, people are truly happy. As explained by one of the patients, the less possessions they have, has enabled them to have more room to love. Following the mission statement of the brigade, no patient one shall come to us without leaving better physically and emotionally happier. The needed Bengali community was assisted with basic healthcare measures , while being provided shelter and sustenance.*

## ADVICE

*Step out of your comfort zone. As commonly said ‘If you’re dreams don’t scare you, they are too small.’ Assisting a medical brigade overseas greatly expands, knowledge, awareness, dexterity... Highly recommend traveling with an established organization.*