

UNMC students take classroom to Guatemala

By Jill Zeman

Staff writer

For several UNMC students, lessons in Spanish and medical terminology have moved from the classroom right into the center of action.

Nineteen students at the University of Nebraska Medical Center are participating in a course, Medical Spanish/International Health, which takes them to Guatemala to study community health, said Dan Teet, staff assistant for International Studies and Programs.

"The students are learning and studying how Spanish applies to the medical field," Teet said.

The first course began June 4

and will end Sunday, he said.

The group is comprised of 10 students who just completed their first year of medical school and one nursing student, said Sara Pirtle, coordinator for International Studies and Programs.

While in Guatemala, students received individual instruction in Spanish and also studied Guatemalan politics, culture, history and health care at the Escuela San Jose el Viejo, she said.

None of the students in the first group were fluent in Spanish before the trip, but after two weeks, all were comfortable with ordering in restaurants and buying items in the markets, she said.

During the second week, they volunteered at a hospital and orphanage, Pirtle said.

"The depth and breadth of his experience and knowledge has been crucial to the success of this course."

Sara Pirtle

coordinator, International Studies and Programs

All the students live with Guatemalan families. The host families are chosen by the Spanish school the students attend, she said.

This is the first year the course has been offered. Pirtle coordinated it with Alfredo Garcia, a professor of ophthalmology at the Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala.

"The depth and breadth of his experience and knowledge has been crucial to the success of this course," she said.

Students signed up for the course on a first come, first serve basis. They pay the costs, about \$1,200, themselves, Pirtle said.

The trip offers many benefits to the participants, especially the

Spanish language training, Pirtle said.

"The immersion setting is especially conducive to rapid learning," she said.

Another benefit is the introduction to international health the students receive, she said.

"It is highly relevant to health professional students, who often will be working with an international population back in the United States," she said.

The second group of students will begin their course Sunday and complete it July 29, Pirtle said.

The course will most likely be offered next summer as well, and Pirtle said she is currently working on a shortened version of the course to offer to faculty and staff members.

Pagans aimed to teach, have fun with festival

By Tim Karstens

Senior editor

A group of people gather in a park for face painting, picnicking, fun and a religious, educational experience breaks out.

On Saturday, approximately 400 people from Nebraska, Iowa and Kansas gathered in Lincoln's Antelope Park for the Earth Religions Awareness Day. The event, which began in the capitol's Rotunda and ended at P.O. Pears, was intended bring together pagans of all stripes and ultimately educate the public on earth-based religions, Jason Blodgett-McDeavitt, High Priest for Lincoln's Order of the Red Grail.

"There are many misconceptions about earth-based religions," Blodgett-McDeavitt said. "and what we wanted to show was that we are normal people."

Blodgett-McDeavitt said this weekend was significant to pagans, a blanket term that includes earth-based religions such as Wiccans and Druids, because it is the Summer Solstice, or the turning of the light half of the year to the dark half.

The day's activities began with a ceremony held at the state capitol building where a blessing was bestowed on the state's drought-stricken crops, and a

"People are taught to believe that all religions except theirs are evil. That is quite sad."

Linda Davis

high priestess, Chalice Circle

flock of doves was released.

The festival continued at Antelope Park where area bands Slow Burn and Circadian Rhythm played in addition to the body painting and picnicking, Blodgett-McDeavitt said. The day was concluded with a concert at P.O. Pears by Austin, Texas bands The Raft and Dreamtrybe.

Linda Davis, high priestess of Lincoln's Chalice Circle, said the event was particularly helpful in that it might have helped people overcome their misunderstandings of earth-based religions. It is something she believes could be unfortunate.

"People are taught to believe that all religions except theirs are evil," Harris said. "That is quite sad."



Josh Wolfe/DN

WICCAN symbols lined the bodies of many of the people at Antelope Park Saturday. The event was held to promote understanding of Wicca and other Pagan religions in Lincoln.

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