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### Study Abroad Begins at Home

**BY DR. CLAUDIA V. SCHRADER**

If I knew then what I know now, I would have participated in a study abroad or study tour experience when I was in college. Maybe it was the many friends from different places around the world that I met that spurred my interest in seeing the world. Since I missed that opportunity, my initial goal after earning my terminal degree was to work with families and parents of infants and children with developmental delays throughout the Caribbean and developing countries. Instead, I found myself working in higher education, teaching special education courses and preparing preservice teachers for the field.

The desire to work and learn in an international setting never left me: It found me in 2006 through Habitat for Humanity Global Village Program. Over the next 12 years, I not only built homes in 13 countries, I also learned about their histories, people, and culture. Like a student sitting in a

classroom, I learned alongside other volunteers and locals. I saw places up close I had only read about in books, like Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, Robbin Island in South Africa, Slave Castle Ghana, and the Vietnam Jungle.

My travels for Habitat only heightened my desire to see and learn more about the world – and I did. I spent Semana Santa in Guatemala, climbed onto the great pyramids in Egypt, ascended the hill to the Acropolis in Greece, and, on an educational tour to Israel, waded into the Dead Sea. I didn't get college credit, but I walked away richer and learned much during my international experiences.

Studying abroad allows college students to earn credit and immerse themselves in a different culture. Studying abroad can benefit students who seek careers in a number of areas like business, health care, social services, education, and hospitality.

There are many kinds of



Dr. Claudia Schrader, president of Kingsborough Community College, says she has learned much during her international experiences.

opportunities to study abroad and learn, from short-term opportunities that typically run during the summer or winter intersession to those that run for the entire semester or year

and often consist of courses in a specific study area.

The first step would be to get more information if you are interested. Most colleges have offices or someone who

oversees the study abroad program. A passport may also be necessary. But the most important thing you need before pursuing a study abroad experience is openness and respect for diversity.

Preparation for international study starts at home. Meet, talk to and get to know someone from a culture or with beliefs different from yours. You'll find the experience is invaluable, especially if you enjoy traveling, are interested in speaking another language, and want to be more adventurous.

*Studying abroad is an extraordinary educational and travel experience. Students at Kingsborough Community College are encouraged to maximize their educational opportunities through travel. For questions regarding how a financial aid package may be applied towards an education abroad, contact a financial aid representative and visit CUNY's Education Aboard website for various programs.*