



## Eye-opening experiences

Meet two recent grads who took the 480 global-health clinical elective last year. Josh Dugard did his six-week practicum in northern Manitoba, while Corey Liston did hers in India. Both came back changed.

### Josh Dugard, BScN oT9

**Placement:** Poplar River First Nations reserve, about a 70-minute plane ride north of Winnipeg.

**Why I chose 480:** As a future healthcare provider and voting Canadian, I wanted to gain a perspective on reserve life.

**Experiences I'll never forget:** Helping a chap dislodge a van that was stuck in the mud. Running on the airstrip for exercise. Being chased by the nomadic dogs. Chatting with the community kids on the daily five-minute evening walk back to the residence; many subjects came up, including sexuality, violence and pets.

**How 480 changed my nursing practice:** I now feel a strong pull to nursing in the North. I feel that the native peoples living in Northern Canada are forgotten and, as a result, their health needs are neglected. A strong nursing presence in the North is warranted as part of a social justice movement, and I feel behooved to be a part of this movement.

**How 480 changed me:** The course made me more self-aware. I discovered how difficult it is for me to live in isolation, without the ability to be stimulated by new surroundings. I learned that I am profoundly affected by being away from my loved ones, and how important interacting with them is for my mental health.

### Corey Liston, BScN oT9

**Placement:** In the state of Andhra Pradesh, India, at a rural community health clinic and an HIV/AIDS treatment and hospice centre.

**Why I chose 480:** I saw the course as a way to observe and learn about healthcare delivery in a resource-constrained country while in the student role. I wanted to be able to make informed choices and judgments about what sort of international situations would be appropriate for me in the future.

**An experience I'll never forget:** I had learned only a small amount of the local language of Telegu, but it was enough to allow me to have a short interaction with the wife of a patient at the HIV/AIDS centre. Her husband was very sick and sleeping, and our short conversation prompted her to show me a piece of paper that had his CD4 count on it. It was five.

I felt overwhelmed by how sick the man was. I felt that the woman, by showing me the paper, was telling me her husband was dying. I took her hand, squeezed it and just held it for a moment while making eye contact.

I can't be sure, but I felt she understood that I was there for her and sorry that this was happening. Being able to make this connection despite the language and cultural barriers between us meant a lot to me. Her husband passed away that afternoon.

**How 480 changed my nursing practice:** Before 480, I had acknowledged that nursing in a country with constrained resources would, at times, be difficult and frustrating. I knew that change would happen slowly, and that I might frequently feel as though I wasn't helping at all. The course confirmed that my assumptions were a reality for me and helped me understand how challenging it would be to return to a similar situation in the role of RN. The experience gave me a lot to think about and question before I take a role overseas.

**How 480 changed me:** Seeing the strength of the people who live in such poverty has made me critical of our Western excesses.