



No Experience Wasted

My first missions trip ever was to Jamaica at age 21. I stayed with a family and gained so much cross-cultural experience. While on that trip I visited a local pharmacy and talked to the pharmacist. She encouraged me to consider returning to Jamaica someday to work as a pharmacist. Hmm...

I was determined to serve as a missionary after completing pharmacy school as I had dreamed of combining pharmacy and missions. In 1993, I contacted the largest missionary agency in the world with the intention of applying for their missionary two-year missionary program. They thanked me for my inquiry but said they would not know what to do with a pharmacist. I was crushed. At that time pharmacists rarely served as medical missionaries. Doctors and nurses were much more utilized. I sought God's will for what next steps I should take.

I figured if I could not be a missionary overseas then I would serve in an unserved area of the US. A short time later I joined the US Public Health Service, and I was assigned to work with the Indian Health Service. I worked in Oklahoma with the Cherokees for the next several years. It was an amazing job and I learned about so many unusual diseases that occur in poorer populations. In 2000, I transferred with the USPHS to the Federal Bureau of Prisons so that I could relocate to NC. Prison was an interesting place to work. There I learned about setting healthy boundaries and treating all people with respect. None of these experiences were wasted as God was preparing me for the mission field.

In October 2003, on a mission's trip to Russia my heart was broken for the lost. I then decided to seek a fulltime missionary position. My job with the government was rewarding, but I could not share my faith. Medical missions evolved greatly over the decade that I was gaining experience. By then there were missionary pharmacists serving all over the world. After a 6-month search for the right missionary position God paired me with TEAMS for Medical Missions. Becoming a missionary was the best career decision I have ever made. The combination of missions and pharmacy gives me great joy. Now, I am enjoying sharing my passion with pharmacy school students from Highpoint University. It is a privilege to introduce them to missions and mentor them. I hope they will develop a desire to serve God in a greater way and consider volunteering on short term mission trips as part of their career. I love paying it forward!



Pharmacists and Students



Roshawn's baby dedication



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Jamaica
Because God Is at work



**A man's
heart
plan his
ways, but
the Lord
directs
his steps.**

**Proverbs
16:9**

Lessons beyond the classroom

As a missionary, my job is to equip others to serve the Lord well and give them the opportunity to succeed. The four pharmacy students I had from Highpoint University in 2019 were a joy. On the J-Teams Becca, Brittany, Alyssa and Tasha were willing to serve in any way needed. I enjoyed passing on my love for pharmacy and missions to the next generation. There is only so much a student learns in a classroom. Hands on experience is the best way to solidify their training. In Jamaica, the students gained so much wisdom by educating patients about their medications.

The patient interaction is so much more than explaining the medicine. It builds relationships and impacts lives by showing compassion and genuine interest. It is a wonderful opportunity to show the love of Christ. Receiving simple medicines like Tylenol or vitamins is a treasure for the Jamaicans we serve. Even more so, the personal contact we have with each patient is something they look forward to and is highly valued. Unfortunately, when a Jamaican goes to the local doctor a diagnosis or treatment plan is never discussed nor does the pharmacy explain the purpose of the medicine that is filled. The quality of time our volunteers spend with each patient explaining their medicine is what sets our ministry apart from the typical healthcare experience. We are following Jesus' example by showing compassion and empowering better overall health through education.

Each student at the end of the mission trip said the greatest thing they gained while in Jamaica was the confidence of how to interact with patients. Future patients that the ladies will serve in their pharmacy career will benefit from the experience they gained in Jamaica. They learned the valuable lesson that people do not care how much you know until they know how much you care.