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The students at the school LOVED having their photo taken.



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Angels. In 2007, Fernandes's mom, surgical nurse Jo-Anne Wilson, joined the organization on their mission to the Southeast Asia country. She went back every year but decided 2011 would be her last.

Paul said that Sarah should go with her mom on her last mission, so Fernandes and her sister, Trish, decided to sign up. Before they knew it, they all had two 60-lb. bags-one with their own clothing and toiletries, the other full of medical equipment, medications, vitamins and other mission supplies- and were flying halfway around the world to the island nation of the Philippines.

The first stop was to a Filipino hospital- a shocking experience that still brings tears to Fernandes's eyes.

"I was shocked by how little the hospitals had. What would be a two-person room in Canada was a 10-person room in the Philippines. There were people on the floor and in beds. And there were no respirators. They had to be hand-respirated by their family members in shifts," she remembers. "I had seen my mom's pictures (from previous missions) but they didn't prepare me. You can never understand if you haven't seen it with your own eyes. I sobbed."

While her first experience in the Philippines was shocking, the days soon fell into a kind of routine for Sarah and her fellow Urban Angels, who included doctors, nurses, pharmacists and a variety of non-medical volunteers. Every day, the group traveled to a different village and set up their mobile clinic in whatever space was available- usually open-air community gathering spots and arenas.

"It was like moving a walk-in clinic or an ER every day," Fernandes says. "By 7 a.m. some days, the line would be 300 people deep already."

The patients in line were triaged and sent to one of the clinic's specialty areas, which included pediatrics, general medicine, eyeglasses, pharmacy and "lumps and bumps" (minor surgical procedures). In her first year with the mission, Fernandes did something different every day, from photographing the "lumps and bumps" to running to the pharmacy to pick up prescriptions.

Between 1,000 and 1,500 people visited at the clinic every day and came from far and wide to receive medical attention. They got there by any means necessary: on foot, bicycles, motorcycles, Jeepneys- the mayor of one town even arranged for dump trucks to transport his villagers to the clinic.

The clinic was open from morning to night with quick breaks for meals. Although she and the other volunteers were busy all day long, Fernandes took a moment every day to sit down, look around and take it all in.

"The biggest thing I took away with me is how happy they are. They've been dealt very little in life but they live in a community that holds each other up. Friends and family mean everything to them and there's a lot we can learn from that," she says.

By the end of her first mission, Fernandes and her sister had caught the bug for international medical outreach. They both immediately signed up to go back and spent months collecting clothing, shoes, toys and supplies to take with them to give away to those in need in the Philippines.

"The people here in Canada are so generous," Fernandes says. "They know I'm going and I'm going to see everything be given out. It's so tangible."

In February of this year, Sarah and Trish were back in the



"One of the dump trucks being unloaded by those of us that travelled into the earthquake area," Sarah describes.



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