

Fifteen years ago HCMM expanded its mission to include high school student translators. Students would shadow team members, help where needed, and provide basic translation, and HCMM would pay their way. A couple of Hancock County high school students with at least two years of Spanish go each year. These 30 or so scholarship students have gone on to careers in medicine, nursing and inter-national studies, among others.

For Dacey Stratton, this opportunity was a life-changing stepping stone. Eight years prior, Dacey was a nine year old living in a homeless shelter with her parents and three brothers. From there, she was placed in foster care and later adopted by her foster family. Today, Dacey is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's master's level Nurse Practitioner Program specializing in Women's Health.

Dacey Stratton ~ RN, WHNP

After my last mission (2012), I started working at Latina Community Health Services, which is in an OB-Gyn clinic for uninsured Hispanic women. It's an amazing job, and I'd love to stay on as an Nurse Practitioner, but they just don't have the funding for it. It's so rewarding, like the medical missions, but on a daily basis -- and I'm certain I wouldn't have gotten the position without having HCMM on my resume! So, a huge thanks to everyone in the group, especially everyone from 2004 who got me started down this path. I wasn't even interested in medicine until I got the scholarship for translating! That 100% changed my life.



Our scholarship program

Dacey did a little bit of everything on that 2004 mission to Ibarra Ecuador as she rotated between clinic, OR, and pharmacy. But what stood out most was the gratitude of the Ecuadoreans she helped. She came home with something she didn't have when she went there: a sense of reward. It made her vow to make a career of medicine.

That summer, wanting to further her goal, Dacey contacted HCMM's Mary Townley and arranged to observe in the Maine Coast Memorial Hospital OR.

Dacey worked two dishwashing jobs in order to pay her way for the 2005 mission trip. She joined us again in 2012. In between 2005 and 2012, she added a BS in Math and a BS in Nursing to her resume, all the while raising her daughter Bryce, now 6.

Charles Hendricks, M.D., HCMM Medical Director



Dr. Charlie with daughter Julia on the 2013 mission

Dacey is one of the reasons we do what we do. To act as a small seed, or should I say fertilizer, for someone with potential, then stand back and watch the huge growth that takes place, is enormously rewarding. Not that we claim any ownership, just that we have been allowed a window into Dacey's life. Thanks for letting us be part of your path, Dacey.



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Founded in 1989 to make a difference in the health care of poorer nations

<http://hcomm.homestead.com>