BY KAYDEE TUFF
Special to Florida Weekly

Working in the field took on new meaning for a group of Florida State University first-year medical students who spent their spring break in Immokalee, conducting health screenings at migrant housing camps in partnership with the Healthcare Network of Southwest Florida.

“We had an amazing week of service,” says Dr. Javier Rosado, FSU clinical assistant professor. “Our students touched the lives of the Immokalee community as they served literally hundreds of local migrant farm workers.”

As part of the FSU Cares program, the med students spent March 6-9 working with the Healthcare Network's Ronald McDonald Care Mobile staff, setting up shop in parking lots, farm fields and churches. Through this experience, students were able to see firsthand the significant challenges faced by the working poor.

“They now better understand the importance of providing compassionate care,” Dr. Rosado says. “As I reflect on the week, I am inspired by the resiliency of the patients we serve. Many are individuals that persevere despite some very significant challenges.”

“I now better understand how privileged we are to serve our patients,” he adds.

He notes the opportunity would not be possible without the partnership of the Healthcare Network. “Their selfless efforts and compassion have taught the Immokalee community that we can be trusted with their health care. The network's staff was wonderful with our first-year students, welcoming them with open arms and helping to provide them with a memorable learning experience.”
First-year medical students from Florida State University College of Medicine spent spring break serving the working poor in Immokalee through the FSU Cares program. From left: Paulin Gotrace, Dr. Kim Driscoll, Rachel Johnson, Sanaz Vaziri, Dorty Morency, Donay Salmasinia, Heather Cross, Karen Myers and Gesnyr Ocean.

COURTESY PHOTOS

Donay Salmasinia gives blood pressure readings to migrant farmworkers.

“The most rewarding part about the process is that the people who can’t afford it are most times the ones who need the most help,” says student Gesnyr Ocean. He adds the experience has inspired him to go into primary care medicine. He plans to return to Immokalee as part of FSU’s cross-cultural medicine rotation.
Newspaper web site content management software and services