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Jacksonville, FL

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, serendipity is defined as the unexpected occurrence of favorable results or events that are not sought. An aptitude for making a delightful discovery by accident.

That's exactly how FAPF Past President Dr. Christine Alexander explains her leave of absence from the Florida State University College of Medicine, to live and run a small, rural practice in Marfa, Texas, located in the far western part of state near the Mexican border.

"I was staying in a little Airbnb in Valenite, Texas. The owner, Mr. Marfa, was a really emotional moment, as I left the church just thinking about everything we had all been through over the past year."

The family was very understanding, but the surgery had to be delayed. She recalled, "Just giving money to people who didn't have access to health care, no matter what the setting."

She was setting up for a rural clinic in Dixie Park, Texas. Not only am I in love with serving the underserved, but I am also in love with rural medicine.

In her all-woman-run clinic and the only staff physician, Dr. Alexander says she cares for patients of all ages from two weeks to a 50-year-old, and she has a high percentage of patients living in Marfa, but surrounding towns ranging from 30 minutes away to two hours drive. She gets to practice her Spanish-speaking skills.

On the job for a few months now, Dr. Alexander says she has started hearing from people who have been treated for injuries sustained in car accidents.

"It gives me a chance to practice my Spanish-speaking skills."

She has also been able to add a few patients to her clinic, including some with serious health conditions such as diabetes and heart disease.

"When I arrived in Marfa, seeing that art gallery and the 15-minute conversation I had with the owner, was the answer to my prayers," said Dr. Alexander. "I was talking about the husband's art and I was amazed at how people from all walks of life had been treated at the clinic."

She has been able to provide care to many people who might not have the means to travel to a larger city for medical attention. Some people have even moved to Marfa specifically for her clinic.

"I've been to Marfa as temporary as it is right now," said Dr. Alexander. "I took a year off leave of absence from the FAPF College of Medicine to run this clinic while the owner's on her own."

Dr. Alexander credits every part of her life and career for preparing her for this work. From being raised in a family that didn't have health care to being trained by a medical school whose mission is rural health and serving the underserved, to becoming the medical director of an urgent care center.

"I love being in Marfa. It's just a small town, but it has all the things I need."

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