Through FSUCares, a student run medical school organization, a group of us medical students—plus a group of law students—had the opportunity to experience life first hand in Immokalee. We came prepared and hoping to make a difference in the community. Not only did we accomplish that, but we too left as different people; impacted by the wonders of what is Immokalee. We hope to give you a taste of what we experienced so you can understand what “my home” is all about.

The packing house management agreed to let their employees take turns rotating through our health screening stations. We paired up with the Collier County Health Department Division of Environmental Health. A majority Haitian population was noted to be working mostly out in the fields. We screened over 250 people in this day alone. Through our health screening stations, we checked vision and hearing as well. We paired up with the Lipman’s packing facility in order to get a glimpse of what happens to workers after the produce is farmed. Aside from noting blemishes hardly visible to the human eye, we also gave out listers and a brief hand out account of the working conditions of the population we screened this week.

Lipman’s “extraordinary factory and high standards of operation,” this also gave us a first hand account of the working conditions of the population. These workers, especially the undocumented, are so vulnerable to oppression. We saw a deaf working hand pick tomatoes and dance into a great workout. We also spent one evening working on our own salsa dancing. Immigration & Law

The purpose of our trip was to provide legal guidance on immigration issues. We learned that there are people who pick our food and do the job only few people are willing to do for the pay being offered, yet don’t have the same breadth of legal representation that the rest of us enjoy. Most importantly, we experienced first hand what is life well spent. I want to live a life like that.”

Immokalee is like to help people and the hard reality of having to tell someone that, no, we couldn’t help them.” — David Love, Third Year Law Student

“My time in Immokalee was eye opening. I caught glimpses of both the ways that the law can be used to fight for justice for the most vulnerable members of our society, and of its limitations in achieving that end in its present form… Farm workers are as important to our society as any other. For all our grand expressions and innovations, civilization cannot function without food. And these farm workers, especially the undocumented, are so vulnerable to oppression. I think a life devoted to working for justice and dignity for them, and other vulnerable people, would be a life well spent. I want to live a life like that.” — Sara Menges, First Year Law Student

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The health screenings were held at:
- Collier County Health Department
- A local church
- A local laundromat
- The Agape Center
- Lipman packing house

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