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Spring/Summer 2015
(Please see blog for more details) <http://maorihenro.travellerspoint.com/>

Question Set 1:

1. What are your initial impressions of the organization and an overview and thoughts about the kind of work you've started doing; how does the work match your expectations, how does it match your goals?

The description of what volunteers have to do is not even close to our daily tasks. I never expected myself to clean so much poo and wash so many dishes. I thought the vet hospital/clinic would be similar to a human hospital. I didn't think mosquitoes, flies, or rats would be an issue. The first week was very hard for me. I read from the other volunteers that I would be introduced to all the things immediately after arrival. No one told me I was going to feed bottles and bottles of milk for a dying calf covered with flies and mosquitoes during my first hour of arrival. I was bitten alive by mosquitoes and fleas. For the first week, I watched all the dramas I downloaded back at home because I was homesick and didn't have anyone to talk to since I was alone in the house. But as the weeks went by, I felt a bit more included in various activities. I had a rough start (like any other volunteer in the clinic), but I picked up slowly. I made wonderful friends and when all the volunteers left, I was the remaining "oldie" to welcome all the "newbies" that arrived.

Before I left, I thought the organization was good, but now I think it's amazing. All the service we provide is free and we run the clinic through the donations from locals and international supporters. Even though I have to do a lot of the dirty work, it's all for the animals that we love and care about. It's similar to taking care of children or younger siblings. We have to deal with their tantrums and cries, but in the end of the day, we still love them. I think Esther Honey has taught me to be a better care provider in general, regardless if it is a dog, cat, pig, goat, or human.

2. What stood out to you the most regarding your arrival?

The humidity. As a Seattleite, I am used to temperate weather. My toes were sweaty the minute I got off the plane. Thank goodness it only lasted for a few weeks since it was the end of the wet season. Now we are going into "winter" (aka dry season) and it is very much like Seattle summer. So while everyone is wearing an actual jacket, I am still in my shorts and tank top. People thought I was really weird that I didn't find this weather cold. (It is high 60s and low 70s at night and that is PERFECT for me). However, by the 4th or 5th month, I began to acclimatize to the weather. The high 60s to me suddenly feels freezing! I refused to believe that it was happening to me, but I have acclimatized to the island climate! The second thing was the greeting. I expected to just shake hands with Amy when I met her at the

airport, but she immediately greeted me with a kiss on the cheek. I was surprised, but I am getting the hang of Cook Island greetings.

3. What was your greatest anxiety prior to departing and how do you feel about now that you have arrived?

My greatest anxiety was packing everything I needed before I left. Since I heard everything was expensive over there, I brought literally everything (toothbrush, toothpaste, food, snacks, contact solution, and even detergent!) I was glad I brought this stuff because there isn't much time to get all of these things in the supermarket (and they are so expensive and I only have a bicycle). If I would repack again, I would pack extra comfortable flip-flops (aka "jandels" in the Cook Islands), more shorts, mosquito net, chop sticks and soup spoon, my bike gear, steel-cut oatmeal, more ramen, and usb full of my favorite shows (because internet is expensive and there is no TV in the clinic. And Cook Island TV has either really old shows or very boring ones).

Now that I have arrived, all the former EHF interns weren't kidding – everything is expensive in Rarotonga. However, Saturday markets have pretty good prices of produce and locals love to give food to us. At the CITC in the very back, where it says "Staff Only," there are two shelves of food items that are marked on sale. You can get pretty cheap stuff there!

Question Set 2:

1. How are things going at work now that you have settled in for a bit? How does this align with your professional goals that you set for yourself? What would you like to achieve in the next half of your internship?

Things at work have recently settled in quite nicely. When I first came into the clinic, I was absolutely clueless and sometimes felt alone. The other volunteers who have stayed for the previous two months weren't very helpful and didn't really explain to me the whole process of charting, giving medications, and all the other stuff. So when I was asked to do a certain task (such as charting), I didn't even know where the papers were. Thankfully, Amy (supervisor) was patient and helped me through the process. It took me at least three weeks until I got the hang of things in the clinic. Since I am a pre-med instead of a pre-vet, I am at a slight disadvantage. But I came in knowing that and I was prepared to work harder to learn the things that vet students already knew. Also, many of the vet students immediately go into vet school right after high school, while in the US, we have to go through undergrad before vet school. So I realized that even though I was a pre-vet, I would still be at a disadvantage.

Now, I know what to do most of the time. Even though I can't diagnose incoming patients or work of emergency calls on my own, I know an extra set of hands are greatly appreciated. The locals are slowly starting to recognize me and often give us food and gifts. A few days ago, a local brought her dog for dental work. I was chatting with her on the side and I told her that I wasn't used to how eggs cost so

much. The next day, she gave me two cartons of eggs and two bushels of bananas. The locals are very lovely people who really appreciate all the free service that we do for their animals.

Since I don't have many pets at home, having dogs and cats everywhere is a very new environment for me. Before arriving, animals have just been "cute." Now in Rarotonga for over a month, I am starting to truly love these animals. Even though Spark (the dog) can be dumb at times, I still like to cuddle with him when I have some time off. I am used to giving Orlando the cat good belly rubs every night before I go to bed. These animals have now become a very important daily part of my life now.

Coming here may have been a test to see if I truly want to do human medicine. No matter how adorable the animals are or how interesting the cases are, my passion still resides in pediatric medicine. This internship has further confirmed my interest in human medicine, particularly pediatrics. When a preschool class came earlier this morning, the other volunteers were exhausted after spending one hour with the kids. For me, I felt more energized than before. I realized that human interactions in medicine drives and motivates me while animals motivates the vets and veterinary students. No matter how much I love these animals, I don't feel the same joy as the other veterinary volunteers. I see the smiles of their faces when they work with these animals and I don't have that. At first, I thought it was because I was new in the clinic, but after a few weeks after working in the clinic, I realized that was the case. To be honest, I felt a bit jealous that they have that kind of connection and love for animals that I didn't possess. Don't get me wrong, I am happy to work at the Esther Honey Foundation, but for me, that kind of happiness that they have is only found when I work with the patients at Seattle Children's Hospital. And I think this is an important realization for me.

In the next three-quarters of my internship, I hope to be able to castrate a cat. I haven't been able to do any surgeries because I am not a vet student or vet, but the vet told me I would probably have to do some castrations since we are limited in staff. My other goal is to find homes for every one of our residing animals. They need the constant, 24/7 love and care that we can't provide.

2. How are things going relative to your personal goals? In which areas have you made progress and where do you still have room to expand? What do you want to make sure you address before you leave?

I have accomplished a lot of my personal goals. I got PADI certified, paddle-boarded, kayaked, and snorkeled. Since I couldn't drive, I bought a bike and done multiple trips around the island. It's interesting that the locals now recognize me as the girl who bikes. I am a busy body, so I want to do everything. However, I am limited on the things I can do since I don't drive. I either rely on people who know how to drive or I don't go to any of the night activities. However, I was never really into the night clubs or scenes back in the US, so that doesn't really bother me. However, I think because I want to do so many things, my physical body can't keep up with me, especially since I work for long hours in the clinic. I think one of my personal goal currently is to take care of my body and relax once in a while. Maybe I shouldn't bike 32 km around the island, hike up the Needle, and do Zumba all on the same day. I think going to Muri and lie on the beach for a few hours would be a good thing for me.

On the island, I have not only made many animal friends but human friends as well. I joined a church recently. Even though I am not very religious, the people in church are very kind and genuine. I really like the community there. In addition, Christianity is an important part of the Cook Islands culture and I wanted to be a part of it. I also made a friend on the plane and she introduced me to all her New Zealand friends (who now works in Rarotonga). So it's nice to be able to be in various communities and have people welcome you as a part of their family. Another personal goal for me is to join vaka, which is a paddling club. The friends I have made in Rarotonga are a bit older than I am, so it would be nice to hang out with some people my age.

Before this internship ends, I want to travel to New Zealand for at least a week. I am working with Amy to give me a week off the clinic or rearrange my flights. I am not sure how it will go, but I am excited and looking forward to going there.

3. How are things going relative to your cross-cultural goals? What kinds of experience have stood out to you so far? What do you want to ensure to experience before you leave?

There really aren't many Asians there. I have been here for one month and I have seen one Chinese person, and he's only a quarter Chinese. I'm not very used to it because there are so many Asians in Seattle and all my other travels were Asian countries. There aren't many Asian foods here. There is a place that sells Chinese food, but based on the picture of their food, I don't think it's really legit. Otherwise, I am open to learn everything about the Rarotongan culture. I have joined church, which is a very important part of their life. I am planning to join vaka, a traditional sport that is specific to the South Pacific Islands. I have tried most of their traditional foods, Eka Mata (raw fish with coconut cream), ruko (taro leaves with coconut cream), boiled bananas, and (one more that I forgot the name). I have been to the Saturday markets and enjoyed watching their traditional dances and listened to the island music. I am living the Raro life – a simple, carefree type of lifestyle. I get to go out and explore on my days off and spend time with the animals. I don't have to worry about working in the lab, drama from friends and family, and school. I feel like all that weight has been lifted away from me when I came here. It's a really wonderful way of life in the Cook Islands.

Side note: I am a pre-medical student, so health issues are very interesting to me. Diabetes and obesity is a big problem in Rarotonga. There are so many fried and oily foods, it's kind of scary. The first two days, I was eating fish and chips/calamari and chips/burgers. They tasted amazing, but I felt sick afterwards because it's so unhealthy. They eat white bread, white rice, and processed oatmeal. Back in Seattle, I have steel-cut oats for breakfast every morning. I can't even find it here. They do have fresh fish, vegetables, and fruits, but I think better public health education is needed on the Cook Islands. There are so many activities to do here, but it's mostly the New Zealanders that participate in them. The natives don't really do the weekly triathlons, biking, snorkeling, scuba diving, biking, or running.

Question Set #3:

1. Describe a day in your life – what is your work schedule like, what do you do after work, how do you balance your time between work and exploring life outside of work?

I usually wake up at around 7:45 am, brush my teeth, and change onto my scrubs by 7:55 am. I feed Mama (house dog) her medication first thing in the morning because she will have to wait an hour before she can get her meal. We feed all the animals and clean all the cages in the clinic. Then we fill their water bowls, pick up poo, laundry, and burn the paper rubbish. During this time, there are usually people who come in to drop off their dog for their scheduled desex appointment or consults. (Monday is usually the busiest because people are too lazy to bring their pets over in the weekend). We typically finish around 9:30 if we are lucky. But it could get hectic at times because three consults would come in at the same time along with the four scheduled desex appointments and we still haven't finished feeding and cleaning yet. Sometimes we don't finish cleaning/feeding until 10:30/11:00 am! Afterwards, the volunteers continue their day with their respective roles. Consults are in charge of all the consults that come in. It varies ranging from a sore foot, hit by car, skin irritations, or nail clipping. Surgeries perform all the surgeries that day. They are mostly neutering cases, but we have occasional dental work, amputations, eye removals, orthopedics (pinning bones), and hernia repair. Floaters do everything in between and help wherever they are needed. But they do a lot of laundry. Laundry runs all the time because there are so many poo-covered towels that need cleaning. We have a lunch whenever we can, typically for about 15 minutes. At around 2:30/3:00 pm, we start another round of feed and clean. It's usually better in the afternoon because they haven't pooped as much, so there's less to clean. We finish usually by 4:30 pm and we end at 5:00 pm. Each volunteer is scheduled to be on call and hold the emergency phone at least once per week. So if someone calls at 11:00 pm and you're on call, you would probably be the one to treat the animal. If you need help (which I always do), I will ask Amy (the manager/vet) to come over and help me. We each work 5 days per week and have one day off.

2. Housing: What is your living situation like? Knowing what you know now, are there other options you would have chosen instead? If you can provide some resources for future interns, that would be most helpful.

I live in the clinic. They have three rooms available for volunteers to live in. Before coming to Raro, Cathy Sue told me that there might not be enough room for me to live there. But I came to the clinic being the only volunteer who lived in the house! For the first two weeks, I was living alone in the house with Mama and Orlando (house dog and cat). I am currently living with four other volunteers and we get along very well. But it's also hard to see them leave so soon.

Tips for future interns – Cathy Sue does not really know much about what is happening on the island. She hasn't been here for over four years. So a lot of things that Cathy Sue tells me have changed or wasn't really useful when I got to Raro. There is housing available and it is free. There is no monthly rent.

3. Finances: How is your budget working out for you? Are you spending more or less than what you

expected? How much do you typically spend on food, recreation, travel, etc? What would you do differently knowing what you know now?

I limit myself to \$500 NZD a month (which is about \$400 USD). I eat food given to me by the locals or buy food from the markets/supermarket. The first week was pretty hefty spending because I had to buy a new bike and get PADI certified, but I tried to limit myself. Also, since I bought tickets for NZ and spending more money on bungee jumping/sky diving, I am trying to spend less money. Surprisingly, I thought I would spending much more than I am now, but the conversion rate from USD to NZD is better for me, so it's actually nice. Depending on the other volunteers, my activities varies. Groceries are pretty expensive, but I learned to find good deals around the supermarket and the Saturday farmer's market.

4. Travel and Transportation: How do you typically get around town and to work? Are you satisfied with that choice? Would you recommend other options? Do you have time to explore the surrounding area on time off? How do you manage that? What do you recommend for travel options? Where do you recommend exploring?

I usually bike around the island. I think locals know me as the bicycle girl. Even though the bike was pretty expensive, I am so glad I bought it because it has gotten me everywhere on the island on a relatively timely manner. There is the bus that runs once every hour. I rarely take the bus because I hate waiting, but I would use the bus if it is raining a lot and I really needed to get somewhere. I wished I learned how to drive a stick-shift because then I would be able to use the clinic truck. Motorcycles are also available, but you would need a driver's license, pass a simple motorcycle test, and pay \$5 to get a motorcycle license. Esther Honey gets a pretty good deal for motorcycles, but since I don't have a license, it doesn't really matter to me. Sometimes, I hitch a ride from random strangers who stop and ask if I need a ride.

On my days off, I usually go work out in the community center. \$3 workout sessions are pretty hard to beat. I also do yoga, hiking, paddle boarding, kayaking, biking around the island, diving, and getting a tan. I'm not much of a swimmer, so I don't do much in the water. Besides, I've been getting injured a lot (cut by barb wires and crashed on my bike in the rain), so I try not to go into the water too much. I really love my bike and I think it is such a great investment. They are fixing the roads now, so it is a lot more pleasant riding on the road. And I get to explore a lot more with a bike. I'll probably sell my bike later when I leave to a volunteer or a local friend. If no one wants it, I am tempted to bring it back to the States because it is a really nice bike.

Question Set #4:

1. How well did your coursework prepare you for your internship? What knowledge of your field has been most important so far?

It kind of helped, but I realized that a lot of the work I do in real practice is more hands-on skills that I've

never really learned in school. This internship has taught me the practical side of medicine. I've never had much experience with animals before I came to Raro, but working at Esther Honey has really allowed me to learn how to love and care for these animals. It will probably help me serve my human patients a lot better!

2. Have you learned about any new possibilities for career paths? Have you done any informational interviews (formal or informal) to learn about the field?

(Please see my blog post about my decisions in career paths between veterinarian and human medicine).

(Excerpt from blog) Many of the EHF volunteers and locals on the island have asked me if working in the clinic has changed my mind in becoming a vet instead. And my answer to them is, "I don't know." Even though I am currently applying for medical school, I am still an open book. Now, this may make some of you think I am not truly passionate in human medicine and therefore, unfit to become a doctor. But the reason why I decided to go into medicine in general was because I love how flexible, open, vast, and interconnected the subfields are with each other: veterinarian medicine, human medicine, public health, and research. The paths of medicine are endless! However, interning at the EHF may have been my final test to see if I truly wanted to pursue human medicine.

No matter how adorable the animal patients are and how interesting the cases are, I realized that my passion still resides in pediatric medicine. When a preschool class came earlier this week, the other volunteers were exhausted after spending an hour with these kids. However, for me, I felt even more energized than before. I realized that human interactions in medicine drives and motivates me, just like how animal motivates the vets and veterinary students. No matter how much I love these animals, I don't feel the same joy as the other veterinary volunteers. I can see the smiles of pure happiness on the other volunteers' faces when they work on these animals. I don't have that. At first, I thought it was because I was new to the clinic and I would find that soon, but that was not the case. To be honest, I felt a bit jealous that they have that kind of connection and love for animals that I don't possess. Don't get me wrong, I am happy to work at EHF, but for me, that same kind of happiness and passion that they have is only found when I spend time with the patients in Seattle Children's Hospital.

Discussing about human and animal medicine with a couple of vet students over dinner, I realized they felt the same way. They wouldn't mind spending weeks and months working on a leg amputation of a dog and nursing it back to health, but they cannot imagine doing that for a human. Their passion resides in serving animals, not humans. Veterinary and human medicine may be similar, but there is a reason why vets are vets and doctors are doctors. Our patients of interests differ. Just like how they cannot deal with human patients, I have extremely difficult times holding onto a cat for pre-mediations during surgery. My passion resides in serving kids and out of all places to have this important realization, I think a vet clinic on a small island is the best place to have it!

3. Describe an event where you misunderstood something due to cultural differences. What did you do? What would you do next time?

The volunteers in EHF comes from all over the world. One of the volunteer is from England and another is from Australia. We like to compare our common words. For example, US calls it a "gas station", England calls it a "garage", and Australia calls it a "Servo." Also, omu (underground oven) usually has beef, lamb, pork, vegetables, and even dog. Yes, locals still eat dog and no, I will never try it. They also eat flying foxes (fruit bats) as well. One of the locals told me they will make me some soon, but we'll see if I will be brave enough to eat it.

4. What is the most frustrating aspect of your host culture? What is the most rewarding aspect?

The rate of STDs is really high on the Cook Islands. The local guys are pretty desperate and they are very forceful when it comes to picking up girls. So if we go to Rehab (night club) or bars at night, we make sure to stay close to each other. Also, there is a high rate of domestic violence, so as a student who wants to pursue pediatric medicine, it really disturbs me to see that.

The most rewarding aspect is how close knit everyone is. Everyone is willing to help each other. It's really an amazing place to live. I also love how raw their culture is. They don't need technology. They can make plates out of coconut leaves and bowls from coconuts. They can crack a coconut with a little rock. They build a large fire within a matter of minutes. If I were stuck on a stranded island and I could take one person with me, let it be an islander!

5. What are the most important things you have learned about yourself thus far through this experience?

I am tougher than I have ever been. I complain a lot less and just do it. The poo isn't going to pick itself up and the dogs are just going to continue barking if I don't feed them. I learned to love them and care for them like my patients, like my family. I freaked out about my mosquito bites and scratches on my first day. Now it's just part of life. When I got the scrapes from the barb wire on my first day, I freaked out completely and got paranoid. When I crashed into my bike and got a gashing wound two weeks ago, I remained calm and fixed myself up (with the help of Amy). I am a lot more fearless about life and independent.

Question Set #5:

1. Describe the workplace culture at your host organization. How does your personal cultural lens work within the culture of your host organization?

The workplace culture is very carefree. The organization relies heavily on volunteers and is based on a team-based effort. So as long as everyone pitches in, that's all it matters. There have been major changes in the clinic recently and things have gotten a bit confusing (and honestly hard to deal with). And since I've been there the longest (besides another vet), it has affected me quite a bit. This was also the time when I travelled to NZ for two weeks. (I'm not sure if that is a good thing or bad thing, but I arranged this trip before this all started, so maybe it's fate that I leave to take a break from the confusion?) Hopefully when I return to the clinic, things have been sorted out.

I had a relatively blank lens when I came to the island since I've never dealt with animals. The longer I spend time in the Cook Islands, the more I got to connect with the people. In the local's eyes, I started out as a tourist to being someone they recognize. Locals ask me questions about their pets when I'm at the Saturday markets on my day off! I think being connected with the community in the very start is important to build trust with them, especially when you want them to bring their animals to get desexed!

I am usually a person who forms friendships fairly quickly and strongly, so I think it was pretty easy for me to get along with all the volunteers. I even convinced a volunteer to change her leaving date twice! (She's staying until my birthday, haha!) There are some volunteers I will definitely keep in touch when I get back to the States.

2. Have you learned about any new possibilities for career paths? Have you done any informational interviews (formal or informal) to learn about the field?

(For more information, read my blog about my passions.) I definitely thought about veterinarian medicine, but I still love pediatric medicine. I am currently applying to medical school right now and it's a bit discouraging to not get any replies from schools yet. Going to NZ for two weeks made me realize I miss the animals in Raro. Who knows? Maybe veterinarian medicine is still a possible career path.

3. Looking back at your pre-departure journal or notes, how have your impressions of the host culture changed? What is the most frustrating aspect of your host culture? What is the most rewarding aspect?

There is a lot more gossip on this little island once you stay there long enough and you've gotten connected with the locals. Haha! I think a regular volunteer staying for a few weeks (or even 3 months) may not get the experience I've had in Raro. I've been in the 'loop.' I'm not sure how true it is, but a local woman told me the reason why they were so comfortable with me and trusted me because I was dark like them. Even though I was one of the very few Asians on the island, they were able to initially connect with me through the color of my skin. There are many Kiwis that are very closely connected to the locals, but it may take them a bit longer? I found that pretty interesting and surprisingly true. When going into a foreign place, I feel more comfortable with I see someone who 'looks' like me. It's not a good nor a bad thing. It's just human nature to feel comfortable with something you're used to.

The most frustrating aspect is their distrust of doctors on the island. Some people go to the pharmacist or even the vet for help instead of going to the hospital! As a pre-medical student, I'm pretty disappointed and frustrated. Imagine if that happened in the U.S.! That's one motivating factor to become a physician and go back to serve communities like the Cook Island. Another frustrating aspect is the other hidden health and social concerns that do not appear on the surface of the culture. The good thing about getting into the loop is you know more about the culture, but sometimes you know a bit too much. Domestic violence and incest is common. Sexual education is not taught, leaving teenagers confused and often committing suicide. It's sad to learn these things, but I rather know it than deny that it's real. I would like to serve this community in the future and to be able to do a good job at that, I must understand and accept that these things exist on the island.

The most rewarding aspect is that it is a small and very close-knit community. Everyone is so close with each other and is always willing to help. They don't really need much to live a happy and sustainable life. They live a simple yet fulfilling lifestyle. As a city girl, coming to Raro has really taught me to relax again. I was a workaholic and didn't know when to stop. The island time was really a good therapy for me. When I return to the states, I'm not going to be an hour late to meetings. But I think I will try to incorporate this concept into my daily life.

Question Set #6

1. What has been the greatest personal challenge thus far on this internship? What has been the greatest reward?

A personal challenge has definitely been getting used to volunteers coming and leaving. I am so glad to have one volunteer stay with me for 3 months of my stay, but she is leaving tomorrow and it makes me sad.

Another very difficult personal challenge was facing and coping with death. Our house cat, Orlando, who I was very close with passed away unexpectedly. On the same night, my mentor of 18 years back at home passed away when he was patrolling and trying to stop a quarrel. That week was especially stressful because it was also during the time of the big celebration in Rarotonga. I couldn't work the next morning because I was too distraught and depressed. The other volunteers took over my share of the work and let me have some time on my own to reflect and recover from this loss. Before coming to Raro, I told you that I would have the most difficult time coping with death and it is still very true. Sometimes, I feel like I should not invest so much time and effort so I won't get hurt again. But I realize that when I don't invest and put my heart into it, I am not giving these animals the best care they can get. I think I would rather take the risk of getting hurt again to provide the best care I can possibly give to the patients in EHF.

The greatest reward is making lasting friendships with people on the island, whether it be volunteers or locals. It is always such an awe to me how close I can get with people in just 6 months. I cannot ask for a better group of volunteers to work with nor a community to be a part of. I would really like to come back and serve the animals in Raro as well as the people in Raro.

2. What words of advice do you have for future interns as they prepare for this internship and living in your host country/culture?

Be prepared to scoop a lot of poo and get your hands dirty. Especially for interns coming during the wet season for them (October-April), please make sure to bring enough mosquito spray. I don't really use it anymore because I can't be bothered and I think I'm relatively immune to them now. But you will be bitten alive during the summer. Please, please, please bring lots of comfortable flip flops. You will step on poo and you will break a pair during your time here. Thus, bring two extra pairs. Bring something famous from your home town because I wished I brought items that were famous from Seattle (Starbucks, Theos, etc) to give as little gifts for people.

And last but not least, feel free to contact me about anything. I have a good gist of everything on the island and if I don't know, I know people who do know. So ask away!

Question Set #7

1. What were your greatest challenges and rewards on this internship in each of your three development areas?

- Professional:

Professionalism on the island is definitely not the same as what one would find in the states. People here wear scrubs, shorts, and flip flops. By the end of the day, our scrubs are usually covered in dog poo, sweat, and blood. I think the greatest challenge is getting used to how the clinic works and the environment we work. It's not the typical vet clinic or hospital we find in the states. There are mosquitoes and flies everywhere, especially on a humid hot day. We scrub poo daily. We clean up hemorrhagic diarrhea with bleach and water without the standard protocols. There isn't a biohazard waste bucket – we bury our amputated legs in our back of the hospital. We reuse syringes and expired medications. I've probably got heaps of worms in my belly right now and have multiple scars from flea and mosquito bites. Although most of the challenges would have turned me away from working at this place ever again, the rewards I've received from this internship outweighs the challenges.

I enjoyed the relationship I have formed on the island, with the animals and with their owners. We keep a professional relationship with the owners, but since this is a smaller island, we would see these people everywhere we go. These people who come into the clinic aren't people who we see once. But they are people we see at markets, at restaurants, in workout classes, in shops, and at bars or clubs. Thus, we have a much closer relationship with not just the animals, but their owners as well. The most rewarding experience was taking care of Kokane, a dog who had fish poisoning. He was here once with a leg wound and was very aggressive. He barked and bite all the volunteers and wouldn't let anyone touch him except his owners. However, he came back again due to fish poisoning and had been staying with us for the past 1.5 months. He went from paralyzed and not eating in the beginning to flopping around to walking. He was still aggressive with the other volunteers and would growl at any dog he saw at the beginning. But I hand fed him, bathed him, and stayed by his side the whole time. I think he saw that I cared for him and started to soften up with me and began to listen to me. During my last days, he would follow me around the clinic and to the beach and stay by my side. He demands for cuddles constantly and would lick my face occasionally when he wants attention. That was a reward that makes me want to

come back to Esther Honey again.

- Cross-Cultural:

The greatest challenge was getting used to not having any good Asian food. I can cook better than most of the Asian food I've had on the island, and sadly, my food isn't even really that good. I had a hard time dealing with not having chopsticks for the first two weeks. The first two months was a bit hard because I was still finding my role on the island. I knew I was an Esther Honey volunteer, but I lacked my identity on the island. I lacked friends and a local community. I went to church to learn about their religious culture and became a part of that community. I began going to work out classes and became part of another community. I made multiple friends along the way, either through EHF, the bars, restaurants, or the markets, and integrated myself into that community. By the third month, I was already part of multiple communities and found myself accepted as a local, which was the greatest reward I could ever get when travelling abroad. When I left, I had many people coming to say goodbye to me. I have a wonderful dinner with my Esther Honey family and my island friends. My workout instructor picked my favorite songs to do on my last class. My other friends came to the airport at 11 pm to say goodbye to me. I felt so blessed and grateful to have made such wonderful friends on the island.

2. Now that you've returned home and begun viewing your experience from another perspective, is there anything you wish you had known or done before your internship?

I wish I had known how much a good, sturdy flip flop was needed because most, if not all, of our time is spent on our flip flops. I also wished I had known there was that much mosquitoes, so I would've bought more repellent. I wished I had known the clinic van was a stick shift and learning how to drive is a very important thing. I survived riding my bike for 6 months, but it would've been handy to know how to drive.

If I came back, I would bring loads of food I wanted to eat that is expensive or not found on the island such as nuts, steel-cut oatmeal, and dried mangos. I would've brought extra shorts and flip flops. I would've brought more meds (Tylenol, Benadryl, anti-itch cream, deworming tablets, Advil, etc). I wished I had done more hikes on the island. I've done the Needle at least 15 times, but never to the other hikes. The next time I return, I hope to do more various hikes. I also wished I went diving more often. Every time I decided to book a time, I got injured or something else came up.