DeSales University Opened Door to the World for this Army Nurse

During her four years at DeSales, **Liz Pfister**, DSU Nursing ’07, saw more of the world than many Americans do in a lifetime. The travelogue compiled as a result of this Shippensburg native’s work with DeSales’ volunteer student organizations includes:

**Peru (3 times):** Active with Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), Liz and other DeSales students helped Andean villagers with numerous projects to upgrade their food supplies, health conditions, agrarian productivity, and quality of life.

**South Africa:** As a mentor in DeSales’ Peers for Advising, Counseling, and Educating (PACE)—which helps guide underclassmen on personal health and safety choices—Liz led a student group to a DeSales mission in the Northern Cape province town of Uppington to help educate families on the prevention of HIV and tuberculosis.

**And in the U.S.:** Liz and fellow DSU volunteers raised funds for airfare to Houston to help refugee families relocating there due to the devastation of their New Orleans homes in the Hurricane Katrina disaster. She and fellow students also traveled to North Carolina to pitch in on building a home for a needy family through Habitat for Humanity.

Now effectively bitten by the travel bug and nearing graduation with her Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) degree, Liz commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Army Medical Department. She was soon dispatched to basic training in San Antonio and then assigned to her first duty, caring for wounded warriors in the neurology/neurosurgery ward at Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, D.C. The year 2010 came, and Liz found herself jetting off to begin her current assignment in Germany, caring for civilian and combat casualties at two facilities: the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center and the 212th Combat Support Hospital.

But it’s not all work for this global caregiver. Somewhere in her travels, Liz found time to get married and now Captain Elizabeth Pfister Poindexter and husband Major Sam Poindexter, a general dentist now studying to become an oral pathologist, have found time for getaways both romantic (along the canals of Venice) and exotic (exploring the beaches and mountains of the Canary Islands off the coast of Morocco, North Africa).

According to Liz, her DeSales experience sparked the desire to reach new goals and destinations. “Nursing is a broad career field, and my DeSales education gave me the perspective to see past the traditional stereotypes of the profession and open the door to so many more opportunities for my future,” she says. “By senior year, I hungered to find a niche where I could be a leader and a nurse at the same time. I found that in the Army and DeSales definitely prepared me for leadership in both health care and military service.”

What’s next for this globetrotting DSU grad?

“I’m applying for a Family Nurse Practitioner Doctorate of Nursing Practice degree program with the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences in Bethesda, so I plan to continue serving in the Army as a nurse practitioner. I also hope to be actively involved in research and …” she pauses with a smile, “I’d love to be a mom within the next few years.”

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