

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Steve Wheeler



Dr. Wheeler in Manaus

Dr. Steve Wheeler, Associate Dean of Medical School Admissions, is a long time faculty member of the University of Louisville School of Medicine. For the last 9 years, he has taken students to the Amazon Valley for a hands-on, enriching medical mission experience.

This past August, Dr. Wheeler traveled along with 9 other University students into the heart of the Amazon, also known as Manaus, Brazil. Partnered with AMOR Brazil, WaterStep, and the University of Louisville, each traveler provides healthcare along with vocational bible school. Some of the subsets of healthcare the group provides are dental, gastroenterological and care to injuries.

While on base, the group provides a church service with pastors that have traveled with them. The outcome is a mix of Christianity with their native beliefs. Surplus members might also offer childcare for the patients while they are being seen. Due to the remote location of the villages, AMOR provides the medication/medical supplies and WaterStep provides the water cleaning supplies.

When asked why he insists on taking this trip every year, Dr. Wheeler explained “We are blessed to have more resources and availability. Our outcomes aren’t always the best, but because we are blessed, it is our duty to help others.”

Through providing this mission trip, he hopes students will gain “specific facts about tropical medicine” along with “learning that the relationships and the heart of medicine is as least as important as the science of medicine.”

His Christian faith, love of interacting with people, building relationships and medicine is the reason why Dr. Wheeler takes this trip every year. “The best doctor’s treat the patients, not the disease,” is an ideal he practices his medicine by. Dr. Wheeler gained his education at the University of Louisville, where he also completed his residency. He says the reason he has stayed with the university since 1990 is “UofL is a place of service coupled with learning.”

Dr. Wheeler believes the best part about our department is we have partnerships throughout the university and the community that can make every students learning experience catered, special and “can provide an excellent mix of community based real world experiences with university based highly technical experiences.”