Sarah Bergman and Svetlana Zubkova hike mountain trails to bring nutrition advice to rural communities in Honduras

Among the 219 individuals eligible to receive Masters or PhD degrees at the 2010 School of Medicine Hooding Ceremony are two who have already placed their education in the service of others. Svetlana Zubkova (left) and Sarah Bergman (below, right) will receive their Masters of Science degrees in Clinical Nutrition – a degree they have earned in the field as well as in the classroom. In addition to meeting all their course and research requirements, Svetlana and Sarah have together spent nearly a month in Honduras helping rural communities with high rates of childhood under-nutrition.

In March of 2009 they travelled with program graduate Melissa Kumagai ’09 and Diane Stadler, Ph.D., RD, Research Assistant Professor of Medicine and Director of the Graduate Programs in Human Nutrition to a remote mountainous area of eastern Honduras to conduct home assessments of high-risk infants. There they hiked in to villages every day to measure the height and weight of infants and trained local health care monitors to accurately measure newborns, interpret these measurements, and counsel parents about healthy diets for children. “It was a fantastic way to apply all that I have been taught,” said Svetlana.

While there, they also taught expectant mothers about the importance of a nutrient-rich diet during pregnancy. “Finding ingredients rich in iron and vitamin A is challenging in view of the poor soil quality and relative lack of water,” said Sarah. “But foods such as yams, carrots, sweet potatoes and greens are available for purchase or barter.”
A group from the program has since made a second visit to the area, to teach groups of mothers how to prepare healthy snacks for children attending school. The stories and life-changing experiences Sarah, Svetlana and their classmates brought back with them are also being applied closer to home, in the development of a curriculum for international nutrition in concert with OHSU’s Global Health Center.

Click link below to visit OHSU’s Global health Center web site:
http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/education/continuing-education/global-health-center/