Post-Trip Reflections of the Harvard MIRT 2017 Fellows

MIRT Peru Fellows Ana, Oswaldo, and Jae serving a farewell dinner to their host family Corali and Lucho (left). MIRT Chile Fellows Ana and Gabriel in front of the famous Perito Moreno Glacier in Argentina (right).

“The MIRT program is truly a unique experience, in that it is much more than a research program. It assured me of my decision to pursue a career in public health and medicine, but it also opened my eyes to the variety in the world. It gave me the ability to immerse myself in new challenges and showed me that medicine extends beyond borders, something I hope to continue proving throughout the years to come. For that, I will always be grateful to my mentors and the Harvard MIRT Program.” - Gabriel Santos, Harvard MIRT 2017 Chile

“Public health emphasizes prevention, and the MIRT Fellowship has allowed me to not only try to understand the determinants of a disease in underrepresented populations, but how to initiate change as well...My passion for epidemiology and public health has become even more important to my mission for standing up for the voiceless because of the opportunities gained in the Harvard MIRT Program.” - Deja Washington, Harvard MIRT 2017 Ethiopia

“I’m bringing back a collection of new research skills, a greater understanding of population based health, as well as new friendships and mentor relationships that will help guide me as I continue finding my career path.” - Ana Andrade, Harvard MIRT 2017 Peru
As I sat in the airport two months ago ready to depart for Chile, I was filled with excitement for the weeks to come. Excited to start my research project, meet the locals, and travel around a country I had heard so many great things about. However, at the same time I was a little worried that I would not fit in at the hospital or my academic abilities were not on par with what was required of the program. I quickly learned that these worries were misplaced. The mentors at both the Hospital del Trabajador as well as the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health made sure that I felt welcome, and taught me everything I needed to know throughout the entire research process. I have now returned to the United States with a newfound spirit and confidence in my abilities as a researcher and future medical professional. I always knew I wanted to work in international research, but viewed it as a dream that was far away and out of reach. The MIRT Program taught me otherwise, it showed me that international health research is not only achievable, but incredibly worthwhile. I now know I can build a career out of this experience and will seek out other opportunities that continue to expose me to the field of global health. Being able to write a manuscript on a public health research project with potential future implications for the health of pregnant women has been an invaluable experience. It showed me the importance of science outside the classroom and reminded me of what it means to study medicine as I saw patients shadowing Dr. Velez.

I also constantly tried to make the most of my experience abroad. This involved adjusting plans and making quick decisions, but this is what made traveling so exciting. I learned to say yes to the opportunities that came my way. Meeting people throughout my travels, getting to know the country I was living in, and trying new activities provided me with a new outlook on the world. As I traveled through Patagonia, one of the southernmost parts of the world, it was hard to believe I was actually there. I needed to keep reminding myself that it was real and I had actually lived through the wonderful experiences of the last few weeks.
The memories I made and the great bonds I formed are aspects of the trip that I will cherish for a long time. In the first couple of weeks I would tell people “I am going to my host family’s apartment”, but near the end of the program I would say “I am going home.” On my last night, my host mom gave me a gift which was a keychain. I thought it was a nice gift, but she told me to read the back and in it she had engraved “de tu mama chilena” or “from your Chilean mom.” It made me realize that in just a short two months I had found meaningful friends and a home in Santiago.

The MIRT program is truly a unique experience, in that it is much more than a research program. It assured me of my decision to pursue a career in public health and medicine, but it also opened my eyes to the variety in the world. It gave me the ability to immerse myself in new challenges and showed me that medicine extends beyond borders, something I hope to continue proving throughout the years to come. For that, I will always be grateful to my mentors and the Harvard MIRT Program.

Nordenskjöld Lake in Torres del Paine (above). Sunset in Montevideo, Uruguay (right top). Gabriel and Ana) stargazing with new friends in the Atacama Desert (right middle) and visiting the Atacama desert in northern Chile.
I was standing in front of the most beautiful waterfall, the sun hit it so perfectly that a double rainbow formed right in front of me. To my right were the famous Cuernos del Paine and about 20 minutes earlier I had seen the 8th wonder of the world—Las Torres del Paine. Standing there I couldn’t help but feel conflicting emotions. On the one hand, I felt extremely fortunate and proud of myself to have gotten to that point. However, another part of me felt extremely guilty. I really wanted other students to be able to experience this too. I wanted my younger siblings to be there, my friends, and other people who, like me, have dreams that sometimes feel too big.

That’s the biggest and most important takeaway I found as a fellow of the MIRT Program—the motivation and passion to continue doing this work, as hard as it may be sometimes, so that other students can have these experiences as well. That is also one of my favorite aspects of the program as a whole. The emphasis placed on exposing underrepresented students to international research and travel. I learned so much both academically and professionally during my time at El Hospital del Trabajador. My expectations were exceeded because I didn’t know I’d have so much input and control over our project. Not to mention that in a few months I’ll be published for the first time!
Deja’s Post-Trip Reflection

The journey to Addis Ababa has become apart of the foundation of my career in public health. Our research gave us an opportunity to analyze a transient health event in low and middle income countries. When we presented our research, I began to think about the policies and programs that could be implemented following our research findings. Public health emphasizes prevention, and the MIRT Fellowship has allowed me to not only try to understand the determinants of a disease in underrepresented populations, but how to initiate change as well. Collectively, the fellows and I have discussed our future career and academia plans, and that has become essential in my trip.

I have met extraordinary individuals who work to provide services to vulnerable populations. The public health professionals at Addis Continental Institute of Public Health will always maintain a lasting impression on my career. Their determination and efforts on certain high priority topics, like malaria and tuberculosis, in Ethiopia have made many strides in reducing the disease impacts. Their careers were a motivating force as we began to write our manuscripts. However, this was my first time writing a manuscript on epidemiologic research.

We were able to complete the manuscript thanks to our diverse academic backgrounds and our research mentor, Dr. Bizu Gelaye.

Our week break to Aksum and Lalibela was historically enriching and beautiful. The sights overlooking our hotels and the hikes to the churches were amazing. Our tour guides Tedy in Aksum and Getaye in Lalibela were very resourceful when teaching us about their cities and the pride they had for them. The strong religious beliefs and histories in both cities were highly prevalent and interesting to learn about. We also met some of the local children and teens in Lalibela that took us to their local football field in the center of town and talked to us about their view of world politics.

Many times, I was regarded as Habesha because of my features. The familiarity people felt with me, often times speaking completely Amharic took me by surprise. Although, it was difficult to communicate at restaurants and places with low tourism traffic, the help of our local mentors and our willingness to learn as much of the language as we could, made our experiences more enjoyable.

The week that we spent volunteering at AHOPE was just not enough. I am in awe of the progress of the ART program that is quickly making HIV/AIDS a controlled disease in Africa. Children with HIV/AIDS at AHOPE were once given slim chances to survive, but the current children are now thriving and ready to contribute to their country. One of the most memorable parts of my time at AHOPE were the hugs some of the children gave when we arrived every morning. They helped us feel so welcomed.

I am grateful for the many experiences I gained in Ethiopia. I would like to thank Drs. Bizu Gelaye, Lauren Friedman, and Michelle Williams for the encouragement and support throughout the orientation and stay in Addis. My passion for epidemiology and public health has become even more important to my mission for standing up for the voiceless because of the opportunities gained in the Harvard MIRT Program.
My time in Ethiopia was truly life-changing. I was able to not only grow in my professional life, but as a person as well. The other fellows in my cohort played a huge role in both areas, as well as my mentor, Dr. Bizu Gelaye.

At the end of our MIRT Fellowship, Colbren Thomas and I created a poster and giving a presentation on our research project to the faculty and students of the Addis Continental Institute of Public Health (ACIPH). The presentation at Addis was very nerve-racking, but definitely a worthwhile experience. Most of the faculty attended the presentation to support us and offer advice on how we can improve on our presentation skills and to wish us well in the rest of our undergraduate and graduate studies. Of course, we had to share some of our American culture, so we brought the movie, “Get Out” for Hanna to watch. All in all, the day was priceless!

As our trip drew to a close, we attended an authentic Ethiopian cooking lesson. Our mentor, Hanna Berhane, showed us how to make homemade Shiro and Gomen. The entire trip, Sarah was absolutely in love with the way traditional Ethiopian greens were prepared, so we had to be sure to include those on the menu. Of course, we had to share some of our American culture, so we brought the movie, “Get Out” for Hanna to watch. All in all, the day was priceless!

As I reflect, I think one of the best aspects of the trip was my cohort. Each of us had drastically different interests in public health. Deja loved the numbers, while Sarah loved to tell people’s stories. Meanwhile, I was most interested in having an ethical debate on what was even the best way to be effective. With all of us having different sub-interests in the same field, the conversations we would have would be unbelievable. We loved to sit down as a group and debate every health issue that we could think of and take every possible stance that we could. Colbren would always try to be the peace-keeper of the group and make sure that everyone felt heard and respected. Our debates will definitely be one of the many things that I miss. I love that we were able to have in-depth conversations on any topic and still respect and value the other person. These conversations helped me grow as a person and opened my mind to new ways of thinking.

“Traveling - it leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller.” - Ibn Battuta
Keona’s Post-Trip Reflection cont.

My time in Ethiopia as a Harvard MIRT Fellow flew by. The experience was life-changing. I was able to learn things about myself and really reflect on how I view and perceive the world. The most notable takeaway is that not all of my viewpoints are always necessarily correct, but working as a team with individuals from different backgrounds than me, we were able to create solutions that were more beneficial and helpful to everyone. In the future, as an aspiring global health professional, I hope that I always remember the lessons I learned this summer and apply them throughout my lifetime.

Colbren’s Post-Trip Reflection

It has been such a blessing to have this opportunity to travel to Ethiopia and meet such wonderful people. This has truly been a life changing experience for me. My MIRT cohort, the faculty at the Addis Continental Institute of Public Health, and my experiences in Ethiopia have all made a lasting impact on my life. I was initially conflicted about my career path and what my future may hold, but I now know that I want to pursue my medical degree with a concentration in public health. I see that medicine and public health together can help to address health care crises affecting our communities. The Harvard MIRT Program has given many students a once in a lifetime opportunity to pursue research and a chance to broaden our own outlooks on public health and healthcare.

While in Ethiopia I learning so many new and fascinating concepts from my mentors and Harvard MIRT fellows working on our research project. Initially I was very reserved in the beginning because I felt like I didn’t have enough research experience. My mentors and peers reassured me that this was a learning experience not only for me but for everyone.
My experience with public health research has broaden my view on medical care, and has now become a cornerstone of my future career plans.

The second part of our trip was filled with adventures. We traveled north to visited two of the oldest and most historic cities in Ethiopia: Axum and Lalibela. In Axum, we took guided tours to historic sites such as monasteries and tombs of the former kings. Being able to actually see the site where the Queen of Sheba's palace once stood was an incredible experience. Next, we visited the stone churches of Lalibela. All eleven churches were simply breathtaking. Finally, we visited the African HIV Orphanage Project Embrace (AHOPE), an orphanage for HIV positive children. It was a humbling experience to visit the children and speak with the director and staff about different issues and programs at the orphanage.

We provided the children and staff with a hygiene presentation to help promote lifelong good hygiene techniques. My most enjoyable experience was playing games and spending time with the kids.

It’s hard to put into words every moment and amazing experience I encountered while in Africa. I hope future fellows continue to take this opportunity to not only further their academic careers but to grow personally. I hope the Harvard MIRT program continues to guide and build future leaders because there are some things you have to experience firsthand. I am so blessed to have had this opportunity to not only take part in an amazing research project, but connect and make life long memories with amazing people.
As I am preparing to pack up and head back to the U.S., I have a hard time believing that I’ve really been in Ethiopia for nearly 8 weeks. Thinking back to the person who found herself in the middle of Bole International Airport two months ago, I can honestly say that I have grown immensely. I’ve always known that travelling internationally and immersing oneself in a new culture came with a lot more than good memories and pictures, but I feel that I’m leaving this international experience with much more than that.

Our week long trip to the northern part of the country was a wonderful adventure for my inner anthropologist. From the ancient obelisks in Axum to the megalithic churches of Lalibela, I felt that every second we spent in those cities was allowing me to connect with some part of our shared human history. At the same time, however, I began to question the ways in which anthropology may sometimes hurt these communities, creating knowledge and tourism at the expense of displaced people. What is the cost of the knowledge we can gain from these ruins, is it really worth it, and if so, how can we mediate the harm that is done?

Once back in Addis, we began to finish up our manuscripts, create our final presentation, and format our research posters. Our final week in Addis was spent at AHOPE, an orphanage for children with HIV/AIDS. At AHOPE we played with the children and taught lessons on personal hygiene and caretaking. With the introduction and widespread use of antiretroviral treatment, AHOPE now has children who were born pHIV negative, and so the ways in which the staff care for children with these different diagnoses has changed. AHOPE has become a model for providing care to this population as the medical developments surrounding this disease have allowed them to live happily into adulthood. Playing and interacting with the children and teens at each of AHOPE’s local youth homes, I was reminded of the power of public health—how it is hard to think what their lives would be like without it, and that with it, they are able to spend their days learning and playing with little regard to their HIV status.

Overall, my experience in Ethiopia was not only formative for me as a public health scholar, but also enriching as a future anthropologist. Heading home, I am energized to continue finding ways in which to combine these sometimes seemingly divergent fields, whether this is through research, service, or clinical work. I could not be more grateful for these past eight weeks, the adventures and challenges they held, and the new outlook I am leaving with.
As a first-generation Latino college student, I never thought I’d be able to successfully navigate institutions of higher education and travel abroad to a foreign country. However, my experience as a long distance runner has taught me not to shy away from challenges. I’ve learned that in order to reach my goals, no matter how far off in the distance they may seem, I must set attainable milestones in order to turn them into reality. Running a marathon requires months of training with hard work and determination. Similarly, I used this method to frame my experience in Peru. As an aspiring physician and researcher, one of my goals is to become culturally conscientious and equipped with the skillset to combat health disparities. With this goal in mind, I made the most of my journey abroad by improving my understanding of public health research both as a career and as a bridge that closes the gap between healthcare delivery and healthcare outcomes.

Engaging in conversations with patients and researchers at Dos De Mayo National Hospital and the Instituto Nacional Materno Perinatal taught me what it takes to design and conduct extensive research projects such as the PROMIS cohort study.

Dr. Sanchez’s dedication to his patients as a doctor, to his students as an educator, and to his work as a researcher all contribute to the respect he has earned. He serves as an ideal role model towards the physician I hope to become—passionate, diligent, and motivational. In marathon running, there are times during training when I overcame the physical capabilities of my body by the drive to squeeze out a couple more miles. When my legs can no longer run, I run with my heart. Likewise, physicians combating health disparities may be deterred by the sheer amount of work, which can be overcome through collaboration in a field with professionals who share the passion of offering opportunities that progress and serve the most vulnerable and underserved populations.

I’m grateful for the life-changing opportunity that participating in the Harvard MIRT program has afforded me. I look back at my journey and feel empowered to continue on my career path. Spending my summer abroad in Peru with the Harvard MIRT Program solidified my passion for working with underserved populations and provided me with the confidence to make my dream of becoming a medical doctor and researcher a reality.
Ana Andrade
Undergraduate, Harvard College
MIRT Site: Peru

At the start of the summer I was so excited to go to Peru that often my imagination would run wild thinking of all the sights I would see and things I would learn. Now, as I sit at the airport I know my real Harvard MIRT experience in Peru actually surpassed even my wildest dreams. This experience has been so fulfilling both by the strides I’ve made in my academic growth and by how I feel I’ve grown as a whole person.

The Harvard MIRT Program has been my first in-depth research experience, so coming into the program I was a bit apprehensive. I was either expecting to be thrown into work that I wasn’t prepared to handle or to be tasked with menial assignments because of my experience. What I found was that the Harvard MIRT Program stayed true to its name and was a training program where I found myself constantly being challenged towards new academic frontiers, whether it was understanding multivariate regression or researching if HPA axis hyperactivity could be a plausible biological mechanism for the association between mood disorders and poor birth outcomes. At every step of the way, I was doing public health research, but it wasn’t daunting because of the supports in place.

Our mentor Dr. Sixto Sanchez had so much valuable experience, and living in the same apartment building as him allowed us to get feedback and ask questions constantly at every step of the way.

The Harvard MIRT Program is unique, because I was able to grow academically while being immersed in a new culture previously unknown to me. It was exciting to be surrounded by new sights, smells, language, and culture, but at times it was challenging to see the disparity between the more affluent places like where we stayed in Surco and Miraflores compared to the more impoverished parts of the city near Hospital Dos de Mayo, and the even more impoverished countryside we visited.

Throughout the trip the most rewarding moments all came from spending time with Oswaldo, Jae, our mentor Dr. Sanchez, and our “host parents.” I was even able to take academic advice from Jae and Oswaldo, who are one year ahead of me in school. Corali, Lucho and Raul taught me more and more about Peru’s culture each time we spoke, and the suggestions they had really allowed us to make the most of it. With their help we were able to plan an amazing trip to Cusco where I saw Machu Picchu, hiked rainbow mountain, and went on countless other tours and adventures including taking a surfing lesson for the first time. Building up my relationships with other MIRT students and mentors really allowed me to make the most of my trip because everyday was a great day.

Now that the trip is over, I find myself not ready to close the chapter on that amazing adventure. I’m comforted by knowing I will not leave Peru empty handed. I’m bringing back a collection of new research skills, a greater understanding of population based health, as well as new friendships and mentor relationships that will help guide me as I continue finding my career path.

“May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears.” - Nelson Mandela
This summer has been one of the most meaningful of my life. The past few months have been exciting, both in preparing for and actually living in Peru. During MIRT orientation, our residence abroad was presented as a time to grow and gain professional, academic, and personal knowledge. Looking back on all I was able to do and the new perspective gained, I am incredibly grateful.

Although I have previously traveled to other Latin American countries, being in Peru was an adjustment. While the people were generally friendly, I was always aware of the stares that lingered on me just a little longer than my peers - or the quiet remark of “mira sus trenzas” (“look at her braids”). This curiosity with my ethnicity was not unfamiliar to me, as I have encountered it almost everywhere I have traveled outside of the United States. However, I was pleasantly surprised by the smiles and kind words that followed the stares.

In an effort to further strengthen my Spanish speaking skills, I pushed myself to use the language as much as possible. In contrast to the typical language classroom setting in college, speaking in Spanish, at all times and in all settings, definitely took me outside of my comfort zone and improved my conversational abilities tremendously.

When speaking Spanish, I was met with a fairly consistent response from locals. Of the three Harvard MIRT fellows in Lima, I am the only one whose first language is English. After many years of studying Spanish, I have developed an accent that does not immediately give me away as a citizen of the U.S.A. Many Peruvians wanted to know if my parents speak Spanish; they do not. Always explaining this with a smile, I proudly processed their thinly veiled disbelief as a compliment to the language skills I have worked nearly 18 years to develop.
The most meaningful aspect of my time abroad was building relationships with my mentors and host family. By always looking out for me and making sure I had the best experience possible, they collectively energized me in a way that makes me want to share the country of Peru with my family and friends. Before departing, I was already investigating ways to make a visit to Machu Picchu possible for my mom, as the entire journey to the Incan ruins truly took my breath away. I have continued to correspond with my mentors and host family (new friends who feel more like family) and hope to see them when I, one day, return to Peru.

Moving forward into my final year of university, I am more motivated than ever to pursue opportunities in the fields of public health and medicine. As someone who wants to ultimately work as a physician for an international health organization in a Spanish-speaking country, the Harvard MIRT Program has been invaluable in allowing me to understand and adapt to a completely new environment within a short period of time. Witnessing the partnership between medical providers and local professionals to address issues of access has renewed my drive to serve resource-poor communities and assist in reducing health care disparities.
Every year our MIRT fellows and faculty work on diverse research projects to address the needs of communities of each site. In the Science Corner, we provide synopses of study findings from selected sites. In this issue, we present studies from MIRT 2016-2017. Please visit the MIRT Program website to read the complete list of abstracts.

**Risk of glucose intolerance and gestational diabetes mellitus in relation to maternal habitual snoring during early pregnancy**


**Background:** Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) or habitual snoring is known to be associated with impaired glucose tolerance and type 2 diabetes among both men and non-pregnant women. We examined the association of habitual snoring during early pregnancy with risk of impaired glucose tolerance (IGT) and gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM).

**Methods:** A cohort of 1,579 women was interviewed during early pregnancy. We collected information about snoring frequency during early pregnancy. Results from screening and diagnostic tests for IGT and GDM were abstracted from medical records. Multivariate logistic regression models were fitted to estimate odds ratios (OR) and 95% confidence intervals (95% CI) of IGT and GDM associated with snoring in early pregnancy.

**Results:** Overall, women who snored “most or all of the time” had a 2.1-fold increased odds of IGT (OR 2.10; 95% CI 1.31-3.35) and a 2.5-fold increased odds of GDM (OR 2.50; 95% CI 1.34-4.67) as compared with women who never snored. Compared with lean women (pre-pregnancy body mass index (BMI) <25 kg/m²) who did not snore, lean snorers had a 2-fold increased odds of GDM (OR = 1.99, 95% CI: 1.07 - 3.68). The odds of GDM risk was particularly elevated among overweight women (BMI ≥ 25 kg/m²) who snored (OR = 5.01; 95% CI 2.71 - 9.26). However, there was no evidence of an interaction between overweight and snoring with GDM risk (p-value=0.144).

**Conclusions:** These findings, if confirmed, may have important implications for tailoring prenatal care for overweight pregnant women, and/or those with a history of habitual snoring in early pregnancy.


**Trauma and traumatic stress in a sample of pregnant women**


**Objective:** To examine the construct validity of the 9 item Traumatic Events Questionnaire (TEQ) and to evaluate the extent to which experiences of trauma assessed using the TEQ are associated with symptoms of psychiatric disorders among 3342 pregnant women in Lima, Peru. **Methods:** Symptoms of depression were assessed using the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) and Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) while the PTSD Checklist-civilian (PCL-C) and Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7) were used to assess symptoms of PTSD and generalized anxiety. Hierarchical logistic regression procedures were used to evaluate relations between TEQ and symptoms of psychiatric disorders.

**Results:** The majority of participants (87.8%) experienced at least one traumatic event (mean = 2.5 events). The trauma occurrence score was moderately correlated with symptoms of PTSD (PCL-C: rho = 0.38, P-value < 0.0001), depression (EPDS: rho = 0.31, P-value < 0.0001; PHQ-9: rho = 0.20, P-value < 0.0001), and GAD (GAD-7: rho = 0.29, P-value < 0.0001). Stronger correlations were observed between the trauma intensity score with symptoms of psychiatric disorders (PCL-C: rho = 0.49, P-value < 0.0001; EPDS: rho = 0.36, P-value < 0.0001; PHQ-9: rho = 0.31, P-value < 0.0001; GAD-7: rho = 0.39, P-value < 0.0001). **Conclusion:** Given the high burden of trauma experiences and the enduring adverse consequences on maternal and child health, there is an urgent need for integrating evidence-based trauma informed care programs in obstetrical practices serving Peruvian patients.

MIRT Alumni Spotlight: Dr. Lea Trujillo

Lea Trujillo was an undergraduate student at the University of Washington in 1997 when she participated in the MIRT Program in Bangkok, Thailand.

Dr. Trujillo had completed her Bachelor of Arts in International Relations and Development at the University of Washington in 1997 when she participated in the MIRT program in Bangkok, Thailand. During her MIRT fellowship she worked on a project called, “Evaluation of the 100% Condom Programme in Thailand” to assess whether HIV and selected STD rates had fallen as a result of this campaign. She participated in the nationwide survey to look at condom use and attitudes among commercial sex workers and young men who are the likely patrons of commercial sex workers.

Since Dr. Trujillo’s time in the MIRT program in 1997, she completed a Ph.D. at the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. While at Tulane, she worked on several HIV-related projects in Southeast Asia, including her dissertation research study in Bangkok, Thailand, that was funded by the National Institute of Maternal and Child Health. This study evaluated HIV testing among prenatal care attendees at government prenatal care facilities. Dr. Trujillo has since worked primarily in infectious disease epidemiology in the U.S. at a county and state health department, as well as at a non-profit American Indian tribal organization. She has worked on routine surveillance as well as outbreaks, but has mainly focused on building IT systems that enable public health staff to more effectively and efficiently use their health data. Dr. Trujillo has been working in Atlanta, GA, at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the past 7 years, in the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases. She is the operational lead on a project called DCIPHER (Data Collection and Integration for Public Health Event Responses), which is a web-based data integration and analysis platform that allows CDC programs to integrate, manage, analyze, visualize, and securely share their data as needed. For the past year, Dr. Trujillo has worked in the CDC’s Emergency Operations Center to implement this platform in support of the 2016-2017 Zika Virus Response. We are proud of you, Dr. Trujillo!

Dr. Trujillo with her family in Atlanta at the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site.

Lea Trujillo, Ph.D.
MIRT Fellow 1997
MIRT Site: Thailand

“What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.” - Jane Goodall
Alumni Updates
Do you have an update?
We want to highlight your professional accomplishments and personal milestones.
Help us keep you informed and let us know how you’re doing!
Please contact Lauren Friedman via email (hsphmirt@gmail.com).
We would love to hear from you!

MIRT/MHIRT is a national program designed to encourage students to pursue careers in biomedical and behavioral research. This program provides support for undergraduates and graduate students to receive research training in an international setting. MIRT is funded by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD). The Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health MIRT (formerly the University of Washington MIRT) Program was developed in collaboration with Dillard University, Xavier University, and Western Washington University. The program focuses on population-based health research in developing countries and builds on established linkages with academic institutions in Zimbabwe, Vietnam, Thailand, Republic of Georgia, Peru, New Zealand, Mexico, Malaysia, Ethiopia, Chile and Australia.

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Looking out over the city of Cuzco (photo courtesy of Jae Williams).