Philani Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition

Cape Town, SA
Maya von Ziegesar
Class of 2019
Intern responsibilities

• Filing, administrative work, tech support, etc
• Playing with kids!
• Outreach strategies, writing/proofreading
• Independent projects
Below Khayelitsha, a slum of over a million people outside of Cape Town. Most of the residents live in informal housing which lacks running water or electricity. It is also one of the youngest slums; most residents are below 50 and a very high percentage are children. Philani was founded here in 1979 and continues to serve this community.

Above A Philani Mentor Mother doing home visits. Philani identifies women from Khayelitsha who have raised healthy children despite the odds and trains them to be community health workers. These women then go back into their community and identify pregnant women and young mothers, mentoring them until their children are 5 years old.
Most Rewarding Parts

• I learned A LOT about South African history, politics, society, etc
• The kids were wonderful
• Cape Town is BEAUTIFUL and fun, really amazing city
• Khayelitsha (the slum where Philani is located) is like no place I’d ever seen, I gained a lot of perspective by working there
Left A selfie with kids from the youngest classroom, taken by the boy on the left (most of my pictures were taken by the kids, they kept stealing my iPhone to take pictures!)

Right Bo-Kaap, the historic Muslim neighborhood of Cape Town

Above A view of Cape Point, a couple hours outside of Cape Town
Impact on Philani

• In SA all business is conducted in English but very few people speak it as their first language -- I was very helpful as a writer and proofreader of outreach letters, reports, etc

• I helped digitize and organize records, making Philani more efficient

• I helped in the educare (pre-school/ daycare facility for the underprivileged children)
Above Some more phone thieves caught in the act

Right A woman in Philani’s Income Generation Project, which gives jobs to community women

Right Me and one of the women who worked at Philani
Impact on Me

• I shifted my studies (slightly) towards issues of ethics, politics (I was already a Philosophy major but have since added the Values and Public Life certificate)

• Really amazing experience, I’ll never forget working there and I’ll always do what I can to support Philani from abroad
The most amazing thing about Philani was the women working there and the women they were supporting. Incredibly inspiring and empowering.
Conclusion

• I learned so much about South Africa’s history, politics, culture(s) – both things that are incredibly unique and things that helped me gain perspective on America’s similarities
• I met some incredible women
• Very rewarding, Philani does incredible work