



### **Practicing Street Medicine in Detroit**

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One of the things that drew me to medicine was helping the less fortunate. I completed medical school in Nicaragua, a developing country in Central America, known for its beautiful beaches, amazing volcanoes, and great food. Sadly, it is also known for its history of civil unrest and political feuds that has not allowed the country to advance economically; hence, the majority of Nicaragua's population lives in poverty. I was always helping the underserved throughout my medical training, which made me feel complete as a physician. Fast forward a few years, and I've moved to the United States. In this transition, I believed I had lost the connection to the people who needed me the most. I felt I must start anew to become the doctor I wanted to be.

I'd heard about Street Medicine in my first year of residency but was never able to attend any of their runs. My second year of residency did not make things easier when facing challenges regarding time management. As a third-year resident, I decided to volunteer as preceptor to experience this type of practice again. I joined Dr. Kathryn Cox, a faculty member in Family Medicine, and a fantastic group of WSUSOM students (pictured at right) to walk the streets of Detroit and find people who needed our help.



I was immediately struck by how many resources the Street Medicine program has and their ability to manage patients currently living on the streets, including a database with the patient's usual location and their ailments. In addition, they carry three huge jump bags, equipped with medications as well as diagnostic and wound care supplies. On that first day, we helped a patient with submersion foot. We cleaned his feet, applied medication, and wrapped it with gauze. To my surprise, the street leader asked me if I was interested in precepting for them and going on our own runs. I was honored to say the least, and happily accepted.

This is how on one Saturday afternoon I embarked on an official run with the most amazing medical students. We took the usual route and met with patients we already knew. To my enjoyment, the people who were sick on my first run were now all feeling better. I enjoyed being able to teach the medical students about the basics of medicine and why we do what we do. Their will to help the less fortunate was filling me with hope and reminded me of the reason I wanted to be a doctor in the first place. I can confidently say I will continue to be a part of Street Medicine as long as I am able.

For more info:

[Street Medicine Detroit](#)

[WSUSOM's Family Medicine-Urban Track program](#)