

India Trip Is Compassion in Action

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It's not often a hail storm ranks among the highlights of a trip to India, but for architecture junior Megan Webb, it did. Webb was among eight Tulane undergraduates who traveled to India in June with the Center for Public Service's Compassion in Action program.



Tibetan Buddhist monk Tsering Phuntsok, center, guides a group including Tulane undergraduates as they hike outside of Dharmasala in northern India. (Photo by Adam Beebe)

The four-week, intensive service-learning program is conducted in partnership with the [School of Social Work](#), and it engages students in a variety of community service and social work projects.

"The most memorable experience of the trip for me was the hike up Triund in the Himalayas," Webb says. "We hiked up to a glacier and got caught in a hail storm all the way down."

Students volunteered with the Sisters of Mercy, Mother Theresa's social-service program, and met with their Tibetan mutual-learning partners. They also traveled to Tso Pema, in the Mandi district, near the city of Dharmasala in northern India, learning about Tibetan culture and performing community service.

Anna Moscovitz, a junior majoring in political science, was nervous yet excited before the trip.

"I was scared because I didn't know what to expect culturally," Moscovitz says, "but no words can begin to describe how excited I was to go. I'm really into Buddhism, which is why I was initially attracted to the program. There's an infinite amount of knowledge that I was either wrong about or didn't understand, so this trip has given me a better perspective on life."

Webb says the group had a lot of exposure to the practices of Buddhism, which inspired her.

"This trip has inspired an interest in sociology that I will pursue as either a minor or double major. I would really like to stay involved with projects the Louisiana Himalaya Association has going on in India through their New Orleans connections and possibly go back to India in the future."

Joseph Halm is marketing/communications coordinator for the Tulane School of Social Work.