

OWU

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Creating Connections at OWU and beyond



Helping Wild Horses

They're afraid of humans—and rightfully so. They have been beaten, neglected, abused, and often euthanized during horrific roundups in places such as Nevada and Arizona. And silently, they endure that which no living creature should experience.

"If These Horses Could Speak" was one of OWU's nine mission team trips this past year, this one offering students and staff members an opportunity to work with abused wild horses and learn to communicate with them. The 11-member group traveled to Mims, Florida, during spring break to the Wild Horse Rescue Center, a nonprofit organization that rescues, rehabilitates, and finds new homes for abused mustangs. For Alesha Showman '16 and her teammates, the trip was about learning to act as a team, as they bonded with horses and went about daily chores. Says Showman, "We needed to 'gentle' our horses and get them to trust humans." Staying in cabins at the Local KOA campground, the students, many of them freshmen, got a taste of their first spring break, OWU-style. They and two members of OWU's economics department, secretary Lisa Garvin, and business law professor Sue Ann Reulbach, learned about clicker training as a way to touch a wild mustang. The group watched as a veterinarian sedated a horse to trim its hooves—routine maintenance needed because of Florida's soil.

"Near the end of our week there, we had an opportunity to ride the mustangs that had been gentled and trained," says Garvin. In seven days' time, a new world of hope and kindness embraced these beautiful creatures so deservedly.

Visit www.wildhorserescuecenter.org for more information about helping abused and neglected wild mustangs.



Sean Anthony '14 and Bridget Haag '16 make friends with a mustang.

Hope in Haiti

As alumnae Kelsey Ullom '14 and Rachel Vinciguerra '14 are beginning their year-long volunteer work for Project Espwa orphanage in Les Cayes, Haiti, this summer, they thank, in part, their earlier mission team trip and Theory-to-Practice Grant experiences. Vinciguerra recalls her time spent in Haiti during spring break last May saying, "I made a commitment to myself to stay involved with the organization."

Founded in 1998, Espwa houses, feeds, and educates about 500 children, and an additional 200 come to the complex from nearby villages for school. Alumnus Doug Dittrick '55 has been instrumental in the operation of the facility; in 2010, the HaitiOWU Initiative was created.

As in previous years, the 2014 Hope in Haiti mission team trip called on students to help with construction, classroom assistance, sustainability issues and projects, and of course, playing with the children. For Lisa Jackson, assistant to the president, the opportunity to be on a team working with children was important.

"I traveled with an outstanding group of OWU students to the orphanage as a staff advisor," says Jackson, who has been part of several similar trips in past years. "Each one has been very different, but one thing that is the same is that you come home a changed person. I've learned that mission work does not end when you return; it stays with you forever."



Emma Drongowski '16 (top) and Lisa Jackson (bottom) work with children at the Project Espwa orphanage in Haiti.

