

In-Person Clinical Placement Testimonials

Remi Lu - PT - Aug 2019

Toronto University - Aug 2019



I really enjoyed completing my final PT placement at Amar Seva Sangam Ayikudy (ASSA). The community at ASSA allowed me to learn about Indian culture and healthcare in a comfortable environment. All the staff, clients, and other members of the ASSA community were extremely welcoming and helped facilitate my experience. I was able to accomplish my goal of developing my competency to practice in a culturally conscious way, as well as develop my clinical skills and independence.

Anne Stokes - PT - Aug' 2019

McMaster University - Aug' 2019



My placement at ASSA has been a uniquely enriching experience. I am honoured to have had the opportunity to travel to India and collaborate with the therapists at ASSA who are dedicated to providing care to those in need of rehabilitation, and to teaching, learning, and collaborating with foreign volunteers. The opportunity for local therapists and international students to learn from each other is truly a unique experience that has inspired me to engage in the global physiotherapy community. Although this international placement presents unique challenges such as working with clients from different cultural backgrounds, dealing with language barriers, and participating in knowledge sharing, these challenges have facilitated my professional growth. I feel more prepared to provide care to diverse populations and am inspired to strive to understand how my clients' views of rehabilitation and health are affected by their unique experiences. I was able to work with children and adults with a variety of conditions which has helped me develop independence and problem-solving skills as I prepare to return to Canada and begin my practice. My experiences at ASSA have inspired both professional and personal growth, and I am truly grateful for my time here.

Maddie MC Kinney - PT - Aug' 2019

McMaster University - Aug' 2019



My physiotherapy placement at ASSA has been very challenging, but extremely rewarding. I had the opportunity to work with many unique patient populations, who I have not been able to work with in Canada. I was able to develop my physiotherapy skills, soft skills, as well as skills to help me provide care in a culturally safe way. I believe that the knowledge and skills that I have gained here will translate into my practice when return to Canada. I am so grateful for this unique learning opportunity and for all of the amazing people that I have met at ASSA!

Katie Walsh - OT - Aug 2019

Manitoba University - Aug' 2019



Overall, my learning experience at ASSA was great. Everyone is very welcoming and respectful and encouraging to the student's learning needs. It was a privilege to get to practice in another country and to learn about the wonderful culture of India and the wonderful rehabilitation centre that ASSA is running.

Rambel Palsis - OT - Aug' 2019

Manitoba University - Aug' 2019



ASSA was such an amazing experience. I arrived here as a student from Canada and left as a member of the rehabilitation community. It was such a great opportunity to learn about global health and experience a new culture. I came here to give and serve but ended up getting twice as much back. I can't wait to take what I have learned at ASSA and apply it to my practice when I get back home!

Colorado University - OT - July 2019

Heather Hill - July 2019



My placement at Amar Seva Sangam has been an enriching and challenging learning experience. I have grown in many ways. My understanding of occupational therapy in a global context has broadened. I've learned to adapt my practice to meet the needs of those I'm serving. I've felt the immense value of participation in occupation- how it benefits our health and well-being! And I've met many inspiring people who welcomed me at Amar Seva Sangam and taught me firsthand about south Indian culture.

University of British Columbia - PT - 2019

Adam Chin February to March 2019



Overall my experience as ASSA was great! In terms of practical experience, I was able to get lots of hands on assessment, intervention planning and treatment time. It was a great placement to develop my self-reflection, problem solving and clinical reasoning

skills, which is something that I really enjoyed. Lastly, I found it very beneficial to be able to look at client care in terms of the bigger picture. For example, how treatment can be sustainable once you leave, what resources are available, how are you going to plan so that your client gets the most benefit out of your time with them but also the rest of their lives going forward. As far as ASSA itself, everyone was super friendly and welcoming. You get the opportunity to meet and learn from so many great people including local therapist and other students. It is a really unique environment and I greatly enjoyed my time there.

University of British Columbia - PT - 2019

Elizabeth Yee February to March 2019



I am so grateful for the experience I had at Amar Seva Sangam. Throughout my five weeks in India, my favorite moments in the country occurred here. Both the patients and staff were so friendly and helpful. Being able to contribute to this centre that does so much for people with disabilities is so rewarding, and I am so glad to have been a part of it. The placement helped me grow as both a physiotherapist and a person.

McGill Univ. PT - 2019

Martin Nguyen January to March 2019



I am grateful to have had the opportunity to complete my international clinical placement at ASSA. The experience was both unique culturally and professionally.

McGill Univ. OT - 2019

Lesley Perlman January to March 2019



I feel that my learning experience at ASSA has been incredible. It has opened my eyes to the possibilities that exist for communities everywhere. While it is not perfect (as no place ever is) the dedication of the staff to giving the best care possible, teaches the students how to be amazing healthcare professionals.

McGill Univ. OT - 2019

Sivahahmy Vijayaratnam January to March 2019



My clinical placement at ASSA was a great learning experience overall! My self-directed learning skills and time management skills were tested like never before. I had the opportunity to explore OT practice in the special school (school for children with different abilities), the integrated school, and the stroke unit, all of which contributed to a rich and diverse learning opportunity. Not only was I able to explore all these different domains, I was also exposed to the South Indian culture throughout my placement at ASSA.

McGill Univ. OT - 2019

Nathan Menezes January to March 2019



My experience at ASSA was unlike any other. I was exposed to a vibrant culture and traditions, as well as a new language. Truly an enriching experience as I was able to

hone in on hands-on skills, creativity, and exercise cultural competency in this setting. I would recommend this placement to future students!

McGill Univ. OT - 2019

Sacha Vincent-Toskin January to March 2019



My experience at ASSA was truly a remarkable one. Although challenging most days, I very much appreciated the cultural perspective it gave me. It helped me grow as a clinician, but more importantly as a person. From the other professionals, to the clients, to the kitchen staff, everyone at ASSA has impacted my life in a deep meaningful way and I will cherish this experience forever!

Dalhousie Univ. PT - 2019

Sang Choi January to February 2019



Friendly staff at ASSA were pleasant to work with.

Sherbrooke Univ. OT- 2018**Laurie-Anne Pelletier October to December 2018**

I had a great time in Amar Seva Sangam, because of the very welcoming and friendly staff members as well as the learning opportunities I had while doing an internship for my master's in occupational therapy. The learning experiences were very interesting and diverse. It pushed me to think further and use creativity to find how to help with some of the patient problems because the equipment available is very different from what we are generally used to have in Canada. Practicing Occupational therapy in a country where culture and religion are very different from where I come made me work on my cultural skills, which will surely be transferable to my practice in Canada. It was also great on a personal level to learn more and to be immersed in the South Indian's culture and religions. I found that ASSA is an organization who is very dedicated, who offers great services to the population and who always wants to improve what they can offer. It was an honor and a real joy for me to participate to Amar Seva Sangam's mission by doing international collaboration with them and I hope they will continue to grow so they keep on helping people in need.

University of Manitoba OT- 2018**Naomi Hatherly July to August 2018**

Completing my final fieldwork placement for my occupational therapy degree at Amar Seva Sangam was a wonderful, unique, and enriching learning experience. The community at ASSA is so special, and I feel truly lucky to have had the chance to be a part of it. ASSA truly upholds the ideals of acceptance, accessibility, and seva (service),

and is a model that would be beneficial all over the world. Through placement I learned not only clinical skills relevant to my field of study, but about the opportunities and challenges of working cross-culturally, and the importance of accessible and integrated communities.

University of Manitoba OT- 2018

Madison Wilson July to August 2018

Amar Seva Sangam provided a unique learning experience that allowed for complete cultural immersion. The practice context facilitated not only the development of confidence and independence in OT skills but also improved cultural sensitivity. Opportunities included getting to work with a translator, going into the community, and working within the diverse cultural norms. Overall, Amar Seva Sangam was an excellent opportunity to grow as a future clinician and I would not hesitate to recommend it to any future students.

University of Manitoba OT- 2018

Richa Soni July to August – 2018

Amar Seva Sangam calls itself “a valley for the disabled” and I have witnessed the truth in this. The campus is a welcoming heaven for all those of Tamil Nadu who need support to regain independence. ASSA was an incredible learning opportunity, and a time to develop my own identity as an occupational therapist. The independent and diverse learning context allows for the opportunity to be directly involved in every step of the therapy process. The clients I worked with showed immense determination and the kind souls of all the staff make you feel incredibly welcome into this energetic community. I look forward to translating the clinical skills and cultural awareness learnt from this placement in all aspects of my future OT practice.

Queens OT- 2018

Adi Rittenberg, Swanti Deut & Taylor Dyon June to July 2018

Amar Seva Sangam was a great experience, and we were able to expand our knowledge and understanding of southern India, and appreciate the cultural implications in our work. The staff were extremely welcoming and the facilities were beautiful. ASSA has so

much more to offer than we expected, and we loved exploring all the services they provide. They made an effort to ensure our comfort and making sure that our project moves forward. We are thankful for the opportunity and look forward to hearing more about ASSA in the future!

Ottawa University OT- 2018

Rachel Worgan May to July 2018

I had a wonderful time on placement at ASSA. I learned a great deal about spinal cord injury and stroke rehab as well as how to work in a limited resource environment. The later allowed me to be creative with my interventions because materials I needed for treatment were not always available. I believe this will carry over to my work in Canada as well as I would like to work out in the community where materials are not always available. I really enjoyed my experience at ASSA and hope to return in the coming years.

Dalhousie OT- 2018

Krysta Longridge March to April 2018



Volunteering at Amar Seva Sangam (ASSA) was a wonderful experience. I had the opportunity to practice and learn new skills in a variety of practice settings including stroke, spinal cord injury and early intervention. Living and working at ASSA allowed me to be completely immersed in a culture that celebrates diversity and ability of all individuals. Running games nights for individuals with spinal cord was great fun and

strengthened therapeutic relationships. I felt like I learned a lot from my clients and gained an unique, rich experience that would be difficult to find anywhere else.

Dalhousie OT- 2018

Hayley Lutes March to April 2018



My placement at Amar Seva Sangam was a valuable learning experience. ASSA does a very good job of building community for their clients and providing a holistic service that attempts to address not only the rehabilitation needs of the clients but also their mental health well being, recreation and re-engagement in vocational areas. I was given the freedom and independence to provide therapy to clients while still feeling fully supported by my offsite preceptor and the on site staff. Getting to practice coming up with creative solutions and equipment for a lower resource area was also a very useful exercise that I will take away from this. I look forward to continuing my relationship with ASSA and can't wait to come back as a volunteer.

Dalhousie OT- 2018

Claire Wilson March to April 2018



My experience at ASSA has been a truly memorable one. There is a strong sense of community and caring that makes you immediately feel welcomed and cared for. Working at the Sangamam School for Special Children challenged me to be creative and to focus on interventions that are sustainable and cultural appropriate. I enjoyed getting to see a variety of children with different needs and working with teachers to come up with solutions in the classroom. This placement has helped shaped how I plan to practice as an occupational therapist. I am grateful for everything ASSA has taught me and really feel like I became part of the ASSA family.

UBC OT- 2018

Fiona Roome February to March 2018



UBC OT- 2018

Melissa Ferguson February to March 2018



UBC OT- 2018

Sarah Northrup February to March 2018



I have nothing but positive things to say about my time at ASSA. ASSA provides an opportunity for self-directed, independent learning while collaborating and sharing knowledge with many brilliant staff members. I am so grateful for this opportunity and I would recommend this placement to everyone. I will miss each and every person here and will be bringing many ideas, new learning, and memories back to Canada. Thank you!

UBC PT- 2018

Robyn Boudreau March to April 2018



Amar Seva Sangam has provided an incredible educational experience for me as a physiotherapy student from Canada. The variety of populations available to take on in your caseload, the immersion in the culture and the campus, and the opportunities to work with local PTs and other foreign students all contributed to making this experience amazing.

UBC PT- 2018

Jayten Patel March to April 2018



Amar Seva Sangam is not only a rehab institution but it is a special community built upon extraordinary therapists and very inspirational patients. The learning opportunities here are endless, not only in the field of physiotherapy but the culture and the character of people here is very uplifting. I came here with an expectation of

limitations both to education levels and accessibility of healthcare, however despite these presentations ASSA is a very sustainable campus with an amazing culture they have built here. It's hard to explain in words, the experiences I have had here holds a very special place in my heart that I will cherish forever.

UBC PT- 2018

Gwyn Narayan March to April 2018



My learning experience was positive, I enjoyed working with a wide variety of populations and being so involved in patients' rehab. It was a great opportunity to learn and be immersed in the culture. I would definitely recommend the placement to students who are wanting to continue working in SCI or peds, as you get a lot of hands on time with patients.

UBC PT- 2018

Ada Zdanowski February to March 2018



UBC PT- 2018

Taylor Gibney February to March 2018



My experience at ASSA has been such a great learning experience; from the exposure to different conditions, to self directed and independent learning, and interaction with a different culture and healthcare providers. I am exceptionally grateful for all of the opportunities to work with children as it's helped me discover my passion in paediatric healthcare. The staff here at ASSA have made this experience unforgettable with their kindness and expertise in the field of physiotherapy.

MC Gill PT- 2018

Vi Ma January to February 2018



ASSA has given me so much in terms of learning experience. From the amazing welcome to my first trip to India, to the friendly people, to the sense of community. The staff, the residents and children living or working on campus have taken us as part of their family for 8 weeks. They have enriched my world view. Not only have I learned so much from rural Indian culture, but I have also gained so much in terms of my clinical skills. I became more confident and independent with what I have learnt in school. I am thankful to all those who made this a great experience. And who knows, maybe someday I will come back as a supervisor!

MC Gill PT- 2018

Alicia Allen January to February 2018



This was an overall excellent learning experience! I especially loved the opportunity to experience working with many different types of clients and the independence I had with my treatment sessions. All the staff were very helpful, friendly, and knowledgeable, which made for a very pleasant learning environment.

MC Gill OT- 2018

Ela Rutkowski January to February 2018



Completing my clinical placement at Amar Seva Sangam was a great experience where I got to learn beyond simply developing my clinical skills. I was immersed in a community

where people live and support each other and was warmly welcomed into it. I had an opportunity to work with a variety of patients which challenged me to become proficient at understanding and treating a wide range of issues. Being a student at ASSA not only helped me to become a better clinician but also opened up my eyes to new possibilities.

MC Gill OT- 2018

Julianne Brown January to February 2018



In January 2018, I spent 2 months at Amar Seva Sangam for my third clinical placement and Masters research project for Occupational Therapy. I worked with clients in the Spinal Cord Unit. Here I had opportunity to collaborate across a variety of programs, including vocational training, carpentry, and rehabilitation and medical services. A highlight of the experience was spending time with clients, both during therapy, and events during Games Nights at the SCI Unit. We enjoyed various sports and games, including a few Indian favorites like Cricket and Kerum, a board game that is like pool. As I worked with staff and clients, I learned about South Indian culture that allowed me to better tailor my treatment plans and interventions. Additionally, we were incredibly

lucky that ASSA welcomed us to join in the many cultural events and celebrations over our time there it was wonderful! Overall, I feel that at ASSA, we got to know the community intimately and in turn, submerge ourselves in the richness and warmth of South India. It was an incredible and unforgettable experience!!

MC Gill OT- 2018

Chamila Anthonypillai January to February 2018



When I talk to my friends or family, I refer to Amar Seva Sangam as a heaven. From the very beginning, the concept of community was highlighted, and I felt immediately welcome. From there on, the support I received as a student from the residents, staff, and patients was incredible. I felt inspired by the environment at Amar Seva Sangam, where the motto of "live to serve- was brought to life and those who lived and worked for the community continued to show me that they were "able-. I found it very motivating to learn in this environment. It was different to any of my previous placements because of the rich sense of culture and community. I found that games nights and participation in cultural events were just as important to client wellbeing as traditional treatments. Taking part in this placement encouraged to me to push my limits, think creatively, and collaborate with many others to solve problems. I am incredible lucky to have this

learning experience and hope to continue learning with Amar Seva Sangam in the future.

Colorado State Univ PT- 2017

Jessie Alexander June to September 2017



I found my experience at ASSA to be challenging, sharpening, and enriching. I feel I gained clinical skill working with both SCI and CVA clients, gained confidence in working as an independent clinician, and learned so much about offering health care across cultural and linguistic divides. I deeply enjoyed living and working in India, learning about Indian culture, and finding space for cultural compromise and personal humility as an American in Tamil Nadu. I would highly recommend this placement to any students open to a challenging and enriching placement opportunity.

Queens OT- 2017

Jasmine Montagnese June to August 2017

Nandri/thank you so much for having me at ASSA! I have had an amazing time at Amar Seva Sangam completing my community development and clinical placements. I felt fully immersed into the ASSA community and I felt well supported. I thoroughly enjoyed engaging with the Village Based Rehabilitation team to complete our CP manuals for

parents and CRWs and getting acquainted with rural India. We bonded with the CRWs and had the chance to observe their valuable work. When we presented our manual to the CRWs they were very gracious and I hope that the manuals make a positive impact on their work! I can't wait to see what happens with the manual in the future. As for clinical placement, I really enjoyed working with my 3 clients and bonding with them, collaborating with ASSA staff, following through with assessments and interventions with clients, and learning about the OT role in the ASSA context. I have learned so much in this placement that I would not have otherwise learned. Thank you so so so much for this opportunity and for welcoming me into the ASSA family. I hope to return in the future as a clinician!

Queens OT- 2017

Chlo Houlton June to August 2017

The opportunity to complete both a community and clinical placement at Amar Seva Sangam has offered both a tremendous learning opportunity as well as a glimpse into the importance attributed to inclusivity, opportunity, and ability for people of all abilities. Working alongside rehabilitation specialists, Community Rehabilitation Workers, professionals of all health disciplines as well as clients has been a rewarding experience as they have openly and willingly shared their knowledge, expertise and lived experiences. I am thankful to everyone at Amar Seva Sangam for their hospitality, kindness, support and willingness to share their professionals and cultural values and experiences. I hope that our paths cross again soon and thank you again for welcoming me into your organization and inter professional team!

Queens OT- 2017

Janet Breimer June to August 2017



My placement at ASSA provided culturally rich and exciting experiences which allowed me to grow as an occupational therapist. I have deep respect for the mission and services of ASSA, as well as the staff and clients who make up the ASSA community.

From the moment I and the other student OTs arrived, we were welcomed to onto the ASSA team and treated as valued participants. I was able to learn more about the culture of Tamil Nadu, India, as well as to grow in practice knowledge and resourcefulness. The health professionals at ASSA constantly seek to learn and improve their client care, and I hope to follow in their footsteps. I am looking forward to further developing in my skills and experience, so I may be able to use these skills to "give back- to ASSA in the future!

Queens OT- 2017

Emily Brennan June to August 2017

My experience at ASSA has been like no other. Completing a combination of a community development placement and clinical placement provided insight into what life is like in the surrounding villages and helped me to match my treatment plans knowing what clients were going home to. The village-based rehabilitation community

rehab workers and specialists are a supportive and intelligent group. They were always so helpful in translating and explaining why things were the way they were. Clinical work at ASSA was at times challenging but overall a opportunity to be creative, get to know Tamil, south indian culture and make invaluable connections with the staff at ASSA and with our clients. The warmth of hospitality I felt while staying here was never ending. I hope to come back to ASSA one day and be able give back even a small fraction of what ASSA has given me over my 3 months spent here. Nandri!

Queens PT- 2017

Matthew Bourgoïn-Horne April to June 2017



My placement at Amar Seva Sangam turned out to be better than I could have imagined prior to coming here. I have never worked anywhere where the people are so hospitable, supportive and kind. The opportunity to work with different populations (paediatrics, spinal cord injury, stroke) provided me with a wealth of experience. Aside from learning clinical skills, having the chance to work in an environment completely different than what I am used to back home has helped me grow as a person and has broadened my horizons.

University of Dalhousie OT- 2017**Alina Tassone March to April 2017**

Of all my clinical placements, I had the most valuable learning experience at Amar Seva Sangam. Soft skills are very important in OT, having gained experience in developing therapeutic rapport in spite of language barriers and major cultural differences will serve me well in all future positions. Working as an OT within a limited resource setting strengthened my creativity. I developed skills in resourcefulness during village-based pediatric rehab where I often utilized household items as therapeutic aids to meet the child's developmental goals. My communication skills improved significantly as did my ability to self-manage my performance. All of the staff at Amar Seva Sangam supported the development of my skills and encouraged the achievement of my learning objectives. I am so grateful to everyone at Amar Seva Sangam for providing me with the opportunity to grow personally and professionally, because of my experience at ASSA I feel confident and excited to begin work as an OT.

University of Dalhousie OT- 2017**Kelsey Busson March to April 2017**

I had an exceptional learning experience at Amar Seva Sangam, both personally and professionally. ASSA is truly an incredible place. Because of the wide variety of services offered at ASSA, we were able to choose which practice areas to focus on based on our personal learning objectives, as well as the needs and goals of the greater ASSA community. All staff at ASSA were very kind, hospitable, and made us feel like a valuable part of the team. They were always willing to answer our many questions about the clinical work, life at ASSA and South Indian culture in general. ASSA maintains an inspiring commitment to developing creative and sustainable solutions to everyday challenges. A major highlight of my experience was collaborating with my student partner (Alina), Mahi (OT), and two individuals living at ASSA to develop a peer support group to address mental health concerns among individuals in the spinal cord injury unit, because everyone involved was so passionate and enthusiastic about the project and making it come to life. The challenges associated with language barriers, cultural differences, and working in a low-resource setting taught me valuable lessons in communication, creativity, flexibility and cultural humility that I will carry with me into

my future practice. I feel wholeheartedly thankful to have been given the opportunity to learn at ASSA, and I would highly recommend completing a clinical placement or volunteering there to any future students or practicing therapists. Thank you to everyone at ASSA and Handi-Care International for making this placement possible I will always reflect on my experience with special memories and a grateful heart.

University of British Columbia PT 2017

Caroline Toop March to April 2017

I had an excellent experience here and am so happy that I had the opportunity to participate in this clinical placement. This is a great placement for developing problem solving skills, patient advocacy, and for gaining independence. I would highly recommend this experience to other PT students.

University of British Columbia PT 2017

Aliya Pirani March to April 2017

I couldn't be happier I had the opportunity to come to Amar Seva Sangam. There were many opportunities to interact with patients with a wide variety of conditions. It was also a great opportunity to challenge myself and build my independence and confidence. It is definitely different from any placement experience you would get back home, but reflecting on those differences as well as seeing the similarities proved to be a great learning exercise. Everything I have experienced here will help me in my future practice and I would recommend this to anyone considering an international placement!

McGill - OT Students

Brittany Myhre, Eudia Jean

McGill - PT Student

Sarah Schmitter

University of British Columbia - OT Students

Mikki Johnson, Caitlin Hanna. Melanie Tait

University of British Columbia PT Students

Jacqueline Peabody, Chelsea Degrazio

January to March 2017



University of British Columbia OT 2017

Melanie Tait February to March 2017



I, Melanie Tait, travelled to Tamil Nadu, India to complete my 4th/5 Occupational Therapy (OT) clinical placements with the University of British Columbia. I arrived at AmarSevaSangam (ASSA) February 6th, 2017 for a 7-week placement. I initially had reservations about completing an international placement unless I found an organization that I felt the work I completed would be sustainable. ASSA has met and exceeded my expectations for an international placement for this reason. As an OT student, I am interested in promoting community engagement for individuals of all ages and abilities. ASSA is a self-sustaining community that builds individuals up with the skills they need to either return to their own community or become an integral part of ASSA. The staff, clients, and family that work or live at ASSA are kind, and welcoming to all visitors. My time at ASSA was spent working in outpatient stroke and inpatient spinal cord injury rehabilitation. The sense of community I experienced was highlighted for me on multiple occasions.

1. The clients with a spinal cord injury who were further along their rehab journey would provide guidance, counseling, and friendship to support newer clients to ASSA.
2. Games night combined with the boys hostel and spinal cord injury clients. Looking around to see a mix of wheelchairs, framed-walkers and modified gaits

all playing, laughing and pushing each other in a competitive game of handball. Canadian students used spare wheelchairs to join in the fun!

3. A spinal cord injury client who was discharged home because he found a job in tailoring, after taking classes at the vocational training centre at ASSA.

These are the types of examples I will take with me from ASSA, as well as having developed my own skills as a clinician. I had the opportunity to complete the full practice process working with clients from initial interviews and assessments, treatments, evaluation and discharge or hand-over. I was challenged to think critically with limited resources and communicate effectively while using a translator or non-verbal communication. With all placements, you have the opportunity to get the most of the learning experience if you are self-directed and motivated to get involved. Students that come to ASSA have the opportunity to add his/her voice and experience and watch along as an incredible, locally-run organization promotes the abilities and strengths in everyone and continues to grow.

University of British Columbia OT 2017

Caitlin Hanna February to March 2017

Being immersed into a work culture can be difficult enough over the duration of a clinical placement, let alone a new country. ASSA assists in making profound differences in so many different client groups, and being allowed to work within this incredible foundation is an experience never to forget. This placement impacts your every being, from interacting with clients and staff, to sharing meals and engaging in cultural practices, to being inducted into the Indian way of life. ASSA staff, and South Indian people in general, are some of the most hospitable people I've ever had the pleasure of meeting. This made working with them and for them an incredibly valuable and rich opportunity that far exceeds any opportunity we could have received in Canada.

University of British Columbia OT 2017

Mikkayla Johnson February to March 2017

My time working at ASSA was the best experience of my graduate studies. I felt so welcomed into this community and was inspired daily. Highlights of my experience here included games night with the boy's hostel and the spinal cord unit, working with

children and families in the villages and meeting the wonderful staff. I will remember this experience for the rest of my life.

University of British Columbia PT 2017

Chelsea Degrazio February to March 2017

Before coming at ASSA we knew that the organization was doing great work and providing many option to those requiring Physical Rehab services. What we didn't know was how inspirational and inclusive we would find the facility to be. It is amazing how many long term vocational opportunities are provided and how much training and education is available to those who are only here for a short time before returning back to life with their families and loved ones. We have truly enjoyed seeing all the ASSA has to offer on top of its basic rehabilitation services. The facility clearly strives provide continued learning to employed professionals, support staff, students, and residents alike. We are so happy we had an opportunity to complete party of our education here as well.

University of British Columbia PT 2017

Jacqueline Peabody February to March 2017

Before coming at ASSA we knew that the organization was doing great work and providing many option to those requiring Physical Rehab services. What we didn't know was how inspirational and inclusive we would find the facility to be. It is amazing how many long term vocational opportunities are provided and how much training and education is available to those who are only here for a short time before returning back to life with their families and loved ones. We have truly enjoyed seeing all the ASSA has to offer on top of its basic rehabilitation services. The facility clearly strives provide continued learning to employed professionals, support staff, students, and residents alike. We are so happy we had an opportunity to complete party of our education here as well.

MC Gill PT 2017**Sarah Schmitter January to March 2017**

I thoroughly enjoyed my placement at ASSA and had an absolutely wonderful and unforgettable experience. I would highly recommend a placement here! You will gain valuable clinical experience while surrounded by some of the most welcoming, generous, and friendly people from patients and their families to members of the health care team to strangers in the villages nearby. In a small rural village, in the foothills of South India's mountain range, you will be presented with endless opportunities not only to impact patients on an individual level, but also to make sustainable contributions to the organization as a whole. I have learned so much and been challenged in so many ways that would not be possible while doing a placement in Canada and feel so grateful to have been a part of the work that ASSA does.

MC Gill OT 2017**Eudia Jean January to March 2017**

The people at ASSA are very lovely. They make you feel at home on the first day. Everyone is instantly your friend; everyone is happy to see you. I also felt safe throughout my stay and LOVED the food. The people at ASSA were also making sure that we were enjoying our time off, that we got to discover the beauties of India also. They really worked hard on having us balance work and leisure. All the clients that I had the chance to work with were also very kind and were all very happy to have treatment from me.

This placement allowed me to learn to be assertive, to find different ways to communicate with people, to be creative and work with the resources available, to collaborate with other HCPs but also other workers on the field, to become a better active listener, it helped me think about the sustainability and appropriateness of my recommendations, to think about the client in a more holistic way when providing treatment, to advocate for clients and share knowledge with others.

I got to grow professionally and personally; I got to learn a lot on myself, on a different culture, on different ways to approach and think about interventions. I really LOVED my time spent at ASSA and I would highly recommend it.

MC Gill OT 2017**Brittany Myhre January to March 2017**

My time at ASSA not only helped me grow as a future clinician, but also as a person. I have so much admiration for the staff, and enjoyed getting to know the clients and their families. The work done at ASSA is so diverse, and it was amazing to see how many people were impacted through the organization and its staff.

Sherbrooke OT 2016**Fredrik Marquis August to October 2016**

I am very happy to have overcome this great challenge! Not only did I learn to become more independent as an OT, but I learned about new strengths and weaknesses I have. With a new perspective on work and help I can bring.

Queens OT 2016**Suzanne Macleod June to Sept 2016**

ASSA is truly an amazing place! You will learn so much about southern Indian culture, and grow both professionally and personally. The opportunities to experience daily life, and learn about conceptions of health and disability are unparalleled.

MC Master OT 2016

Alexandra Willox July to Aug 2016



I was fortunate to complete my final occupational therapy clinical placement for 8 weeks at Amar Seva Sangam. What I enjoyed most about this experience was the chance to develop my clinical skills in more than one practice area. I was able to gain independence with both children in early intervention and adults in the sub-acute spinal cord injury unit. This helped build my self-confidence to engage in client interactions in diverse settings. Although challenging at times, I feel as though I have learned many valuable lessons during my time at ASSA. Specifically, I was able to become more proficient at practicing OT creatively with low resources and in a culturally diverse setting. These are valuable skills that I will also be able to apply back in Canada. Beyond therapy, the staff and clients at ASSA were truly so welcoming during my entire stay. I would recommend this placement to future students that are seeking an enriching self-directed learning opportunity.

MC Master OT 2016

Aliya Satani July to Aug 2016

My stay at Amar Seva Sangam was everything and nothing like I expected it to be! It is such a wonderful place, set among the mountains of Southern India. I have been challenged during my time here, to draw upon my OT skills and was driven by a sense of responsibility to my clients. As a result, I have not only learned about how to practice occupational therapy, but I have seen the true value of OT and have felt like I have made a significant contribution. It has also exposed me to similarities and differences in

occupational therapy practice by seeing a different way of life in another part of the world. What I have enjoyed the most about my time here? The clients and their families who I've had the fortune to work with, the people that say hi to me on my daily walks and the staff members that help us do what we need to do it is truly the people that I have learned from and laughed with that have made this experience so enjoyable.

University of Manitoba OT 2016

Jessica MacLean July to Sep 2016



University of Manitoba PT 2016

Aric Bremer May to July 2016

The friendly staff and encouraging atmosphere help you acclimatize quickly. ASSA quickly becomes a second home more than a place of work, and you will rapidly establish strong relationships with your patients. A clinical rotation at ASSA will leave you a more well-rounded professional with an experience of a lifetime at your back!



University of Manitoba PT 2016

Kaitlyn Joyal May to July 2016

With only a handful of days left here at Amar Seva Sangam, I've been starting to get used to the idea of leaving; melancholy doesn't even begin to describe it. I've made some great friendships here with my patients, the staff and the OT students who come from all over Canada. I came into this placement not knowing what to expect, and by all accounts, I have grown from my time here at ASSA. This last week has been spent really exploring and soaking in the culture here at ASSA. I've taking many opportunities to grow as a therapist and an individual.

India has a warmth about it (and not just the 40+ degree weather) that can't be ignored. People here are so generous, kind beyond what one would think possible. There is a playful nature to people, revealed in a quick smile in passing or a wallop on the back after a joke (made usually at someone's expense).

The practice of physiotherapy aims to improve the quality of life of each individual—regardless of race, gender, culture, religious beliefs, language, setting etc—it is the very foundation with which therapists begin. As students, we may not know all the assessment techniques or treatment methods, but we know we want to leave our patients with a better life than before we met. This might mean that they don't have pain as often (or at all if you're lucky!), they are able to walk further, they can propel their wheelchair better or are simply more engaged with their environment. ASSA has really challenged me as a therapist to return to this "big picture- approach; it is something I will undoubtedly carry forward into my career. And while I am taking a big chunk of ASSA with me, I am also leaving an even bigger part of myself here. Working abroad for such a short time should always be approached carefully, I think the unique environment of Amar Seva Sengam offers an experience that will, without hesitation, make better therapists and better people.

Western OT 2016

Cameron Van Oort Apr to Jun 2016



ASSA was a very unique placement experience, that both taught me clinical skills and cultural skills. Although very different than working in the Canadian setting, it exposed me to not only working in a different language, but also in a different culture. Additionally, working in an under resourced setting was both challenging and rewarding. I felt I was able to see some processes more detailed and holistic way, as wheelchairs for example are developed on site.

The opportunity to work for with individuals in a less pressured and time sensitive setting was also beneficial to understand each patient's story in detail and develop rapport with them. There was also excellent opportunity to educate patients and other healthcare professionals on a variety of topics. Although not always well received, if you are able to work with the people and collaborate, education and discussion is much easier and better received.

All in all, this placement was an excellent and rewarding experience. The people I met were genuine and the time I spent here was enjoyable. Having a clinical instructor to work with is a necessary tool to ensure this enjoyment and success in this placement. I hope to one day potentially return to ASSA with more experience and knowledge to help the people here.

Western OT 2016

Ashleigh Laine Apr to Jun 2016



This clinical placement provided learning opportunities in a completely new and different way than my placements in Canada. I feel that I have developed as a clinician and realized some of my own values in my practice. The unique challenges that are presented in an under-resourced setting require creative problem solving and initiative. I was forced to be innovative in developing solutions to seating issues and finding the materials or tools I needed to assist my clients in reaching their goals. Working in a culture different from my own also helped me to develop my client-centered approach to practice. I first had to learn about the occupations that my clients wished to work on before I could help them reach these goals. For example, a stroke client who was a flower merchant wished to be able to make flower garlands again. I was unfamiliar with this occupation and first had to learn how to do this intricate fine motor task in order to help him work toward his goal. I constantly found myself learning about the meaning and value of performing occupations in a certain way for my clients. This is a skill that will help me in any setting at home or abroad. The challenge of communicating through a language barrier during this placement allowed me to discover new ways to communicate, and encouraged me to use simple and clear language to assess, treat, and educate my clients with the use of a translator. In the end, I built rapport with my clients that made saying goodbye very difficult. I always felt welcomed by everyone at ASSA. Everywhere you go on campus the staff, clients, and residents are happy to greet

you and make you feel at home. I will miss all of the friendly smiling faces that make up this unique community.

Queens OT 2016

Katie Fortuna Apr to Jun 2016

I enjoyed this placement beyond words, with endless learning opportunities both professionally and personally. The residents and patients at ASSA are so welcoming and friendly, and they are the people who made the experience so enjoyable. Although the placement came with its challenges, there is ample opportunity for learning and growth with this organization and it was inspiring and amazing to be a part of it.



Queens OT 2016

Stephanie Venedam Apr to Jun 2016

Amar Seva Sangam Ayikudi (ASSA) was where I had the opportunity to go outside of my comfort zone and complete my final clinical and community development placement as an occupational therapy student. It was definitely a placement that challenged my capacity as a professional and student. I received a warm welcome by all the staff, clients, and members of ASSA and had an emotional departure as I have left a part of heart in Ayikudi, India. I will be forever grateful for my experience at Amar Seva Sangam and would definitely recommend this placement for all future students.



Queens PT 2016

Amaal Popat Feb to Apr 2016

Overall this is a fantastic placement. I was exposed to several conditions that are more rare in Canada (ex. a plethora of patients with cerebral palsy, which provided ample opportunity to compare and contrast), and exposed to different treatment techniques and approaches to physiotherapy. The placement is well organized, and I was well taken care of. Everything about this placement was positive the people, especially, are so, so, so genuine and so welcoming. They don't give you much of an opportunity to be homesick and they are more than willing to meet all of your needs. I definitely recommend this placement to future students.



UBC 2016

Kendra Nimmo UBC University, OT Feb to Mar -2016



We were the first students to do Village Based Rehab, and so it was up to us to orient ourselves and discover the OT role within the community. Coming into the placement we had no idea what to expect. ASSA OT, Mahi, was very good to us. She took the time out of her busy schedule to attend visits with us and to take us to each home and new community. She made us feel very welcome and at home in India. We will pass along what we have learned to future students so that they can come in with more preparation. For our first week in the village, we were expected to see 7 new clients, which proved to be too

many due to preparation and travel time. We narrowed this number down to 6 clients, 4 in the morning at the EI center and 2 home visits in the afternoon. This number was better for the caseload. There was a lack of continuity because we had to switch villages every week. I think that future students will see improvements if they are able to stay in one village for the full 6 weeks of placement, and to spend every second day doing preparation at ASSA campus.

Caitlyn was also new to the Indian community rehab environment, and so she could only do so much to prepare us for our community visits. She worked along side us to discuss our caseloads and the role of OT in the villages, and we were able to learn together. She was an excellent resource, a never-ending source of positive energy and an amazing role model. Our India experience would not have been the same without her.

This placement has taught me so much about practicing OT in a different culture, of and about the importance of learning and respecting different cultural values. I have learned that creative and simple intervention strategies are often the most effective. ASSA has a wonderful and progressive program and I feel very lucky to have been a part of the good work that you do here.

UBC 2016

Elyse Stokley UBC University, OT Feb to Mar -2016



I feel very privileged to have had the opportunity to complete my 4th Occupational Therapy placement at ASSA. For the first half of my placement, we were participating in Village-Based Rehabilitation (VBR) in three separate villages, visiting both Early Intervention Center and family's homes. For the second half of my placement, I was in

the Spinal Cord Unit, where I completed Occupational Therapy sessions with two individuals.

The VBR was a very unique experience, where we were able to learn a lot from the staff, Occupational Therapy practice in India and Indian culture. Here we had the opportunity to observe, assess, plan and implement therapy plans with various children. When visiting children in their homes, many of the challenges we addressed revolved around accessibility, which included seating and feeding. Managing two clients in the spinal cord center allowed me to work on problem solving around activities of daily living, as well as exercising clinical reasoning.

One of my highlights was providing one of the client's the opportunity to write for the first time in 10 years since his injury. Based on what I saw and experienced at the Spinal Cord center, peer counseling would be of great benefit to the center. This would allow new admissions to speak to current ASSA spinal cord patients about their worries, challenges and anything else. Thank you Amar Seva Sangam for an amazing learning opportunity!

UBC 2016

Alison Wright UBC University, OT Feb to Mar -2016

I greatly value the experiences that I have gained as an occupational therapy student during my clinical placement at Amar Seva Sangam. Amar Seva Sangam is an inclusive environment for people with disabilities and is making positive strides forward to empowering people with disabilities in India. The vocational training programs stand out to me, giving people the skills and confidence for employment within and beyond Amar Seva Sangam. Vocational programs include but are not limited to tailoring, typewriting, computer skills, home appliances servicing, cell phone services, book making & binding, and gold appraiser training. I took part in an international placement to be exposed to a culture and a clinical perspective that is altogether different than what is familiar to me in Canada, and I feel that I received that and so much more through my time here.



**Ai-Vi Nguyen McGill University,
OT Jan to Feb 2016**

This clinical placement was probably the most enriching experience that I have ever experienced on an educational level and on a personal level. I would recommend this setting to any volunteers looking to learn about rehabilitation in a low resource environment and looking to live a cultural experience like none other!



Saeideh Shahin McGill University,

OT Jan to Feb 2016

I learned a lot from Amar Seva Sangam on an academic, clinical and personal level. I am very grateful for being able to do my placement in this center and I believe that we need more Amar Seva Sangams across the globe. It was in this place that I felt that no one was disabled. Amar Seva sangam is simply an amazing place to work at.



Sitara Khan McGill University,

OT Jan to Feb -2016

This placement at Amar Seva Sangam was an absolutely wonderful and extremely educational learning experience! All the staff members were very friendly and helpful whenever we needed their assistance, and made the 8 week placement feel just like home! We had ample opportunity to see many different cases and clients, as well as do a community visit to learn about the clientele in the village making the whole experience even more comprehensive and exciting. Furthermore, this opportunity gave us a chance to learn to be more independent in our work, as we were always regarded as competent individuals, and enabled us to grow and foster as confident and hardworking occupational therapy students.



**Melissa Latos McGill University,
OT Jan to Feb -2016**

Working at Amar Seva Sangam has been such an enriching experience. This clinical placement exceeded my expectations and allowed me to grow as an OT student and as an individual. I have constantly been inspired at the motivation of the patients, students and others who are working through their challenges towards their goals. The broad scope of Amar Seva Sangam and the welcoming and inclusive environment make the facility a wonderful place and one that I hope to visit again. Many memories made!



**University of Manitoba 2015
Anne Marie OT 2015**

I have had such a positive experience completing my OT clinical placement at ASSA. The clients and staff have been so friendly, helpful, and positive throughout my entire stay. I thoroughly enjoyed working at the Sangam School where I had the opportunity to collaborate with and work alongside the teachers to provide a variety of sensory-based classroom interventions for students diagnosed with autism. I have developed valuable

problem solving and clinical reasoning skills that will be very helpful during my transition from a student to a professional OT. I want to extend a huge thank you to the staff and clients at ASSA who have positively impacted my life at a personal and professional level.



McMaster University 2015

Ramanjit Kaur Garcha OT 2015

My time at Amar Seva Sangam (ASSA) has been a really positive and enriching learning experience for me. Working in the Spinal Cord Unit really helped me see the importance of occupational therapy in the rehabilitation setting. I really enjoyed working with the clients and staff here. The positive attitude of all the clients really made me look forward to coming into the unit each day. The staff were all really friendly and did their best to help if I ever needed anything. I'm really glad I did my placement here and am going to miss everyone at ASSA!



University of Manitoba 2015

Kara Staples OT 2015

Amar SevaSangam is a fantastic organization. They are providing a much needed service. I feel privileged to have been able to be a part of the ASSA family for 6 weeks. The staff and clients are among some of the most wonderful people I have ever met. Completing my fieldwork placement at ASSA has helped develop my clinical skills in a way that I do not think would have happened in Canada. It challenged my clinical reasoning, problem solving and resourcefulness. I appreciated the opportunity to immerse myself in a new and fascinating culture. It was a great learning experience for me personally and professionally.



University of Manitoba 2015

Chris Friesen OT 2015

My experience as ASSA was amazing. I felt warmly welcomed by everyone on campus. I was able to learn clinical skills while having a very special cross cultural experience. The language barrier was at times frustrating, but it was amazing to be able to connect with people without words. I was touched by the caring community in the spinal cord unit, where everyone looks out for each other. I am leaving with memories that are very dear to me. Thank you to all the staff and patients for making this an unbelievable experience.



Queens 2015

Clare Bushra & Pablo Chang OT 2015



Our time at Amar Seva Sangam (ASSA) has been nothing short of an amazing journey of professional and personal learning. Working daily in the Kanchi Block, which services patients with spinal cord injuries, we bore witness to the great work that ASSA has, and continues to do in southern India.

The staff here have been a great help with facilitating our project and work. They have been exceptionally cooperative, eager to learn and problem solve, and provide us with helpful feedback. No stint of work in a foreign country is without its bumps along the road. This is especially true in India where the communication barrier is at times frustrating. Especially the Indian had nod which it seems only the most nuanced foreigners can begin to understand. However, in learning to communicate through means other than spoken language, we touch upon the universality of community. Focus is taken off where our differences are, and placed on shared commonality. Staff here are creative problem solvers, and in a setting like India, they have to be. We have seen some amazing things done with the limited resources they possess, and make it work. When asked to take on responsibilities outside of their normal duties, they are willing to help, and again, eager to learn if they know it will benefit the patients in the long run. It is

apparent from our time here that the staff at the spinal cord unit are one of ASSA's biggest assets with respect to provision of care.

The patients at the spinal cord unit are without a doubt some of the bravest people we have met. Without the cushiony social safety net of the west, and limited resources at their disposal, their prospects can be difficult to imagine. But this does not seem to taint the atmosphere felt at the unit. Patients are cheery, welcoming, and most of all, jump at the chance to help out their fellow brothers. The sense of camaraderie is definitely palpable. Here are a group of individuals with limited things in common, brought together by a life changing experience, and learning together what it means to thrive with a spinal cord injury. Learning that would not otherwise be possible without the continued work of ASSA.

In 5 weeks of community development fieldwork, it has become apparent to us that the work at the spinal cord unit, and ASSA as a whole, has had an impact in the local, and provincial communities of southern India. What amazes more is that the facility runs largely on charitable donations from various benefactors. ASSA is on our radar now, and we plan to visit in the future as full clinicians to contribute to their work.

Marie-Anne McGill University Student, OT 2013



I did a clinical placement of 2 months (from January to February 2013) at ASSA as an occupational therapy student from McGill University. We were a group of 3 and the 1st group from McGill to work/volunteer at ASSA. We worked with all the clientele at

ASSA which include: special school children (autism, sensory deficits, general delayed development, cerebral palsy), spinal cord injury patients, stroke outpatient, and village-based rehabilitation.

I worked a lot with the physiotherapists (our supervisor there was M. Rama Subramanian), the specialized educators, other volunteers and often also with parents/family of patient.

I evaluated, proposed a treatment plan and did therapy with the patients. I was also supervised by Janna, an OT from Ottawa during the whole placement. We had weekly reports to submit.

This placement provides me with many strengths and insights: -Communication with patients and family, explaining our therapy and asking questions were a challenge because of the language barrier. I managed by learning key words in tamil, and using physical demonstrations. Taking time to understand the patient's stories is crucial. Learn to think on your feet, we don't always have the patient's medical history, so we had to work with what we see, we learn to assess quickly what was the functional and physical limitations and had to come up with a therapy plan. There were many medical conditions that we did not know of or have not seen back in Canada (polio, severe club foot, and spastic cerebral palsy).

"Creativity: When we don't have resources, we have to find ways to create adaptive equipments Ex: adapted clipnail for the Spinal cord patients, transfer board from a regular wood board. During VBR (village-based), we had to find ways to adapt as spinal cord injury patient's home. Coming up with therapy ideas that is relevant to the patient's culture and environment.

"Teamwork, involving families and teachers in order to provide sustainable care. We developed a trusting working relationships with the patients and physiotherapists. We learn from them and also shared our knowledge about OT and Canadian healthcare. Village based rehabilitation; I find that was the most difficult but also most rewarding experience; we moved from community centers to people's homes and had very limited time per home because there was so much to do. And we want to make sure that parents can understand what we did. Some houses were also very limited (reduced space, reduced lighting, intense heat, noises and sometimes the places were not really clean) but I learned to not be affected or even afraid by the environmental factors and focus on

what I had to do. Treatments involve passive exercises, sensory stimulation, active involvement of children through games and education to parents.

We also accompanied the children at the Chennai Olympics tournament, where we solidified our bonds with them. That was more about volunteering since we did not provide treatment, but were only there to accompany them and encourage them through the tournament.

Andrea Neufeld Univeristy of British Columbia Graduate Student, PT 2013



"We had asked to experience all the different services ASSA has to offer, so each week was spent in a different area working with different patient populations. However, we spent a significant amount of time with the spinal cord patients (did a daily treatment session with one of the spinal cord patients) and tried to work with the home children each day. We took part in a variety of clinical activities: patient assessments (using the proper assessment forms), treatment sessions, progression of treatment, patient and family education, discharge planning.

I learned valuable information about pediatric conditions, as this is a small portion of our course curriculum in Canada- for example treating severe club foot and cerebral palsy. The staff and patients at ASSA were a pleasure to work with- everyone was friendly and made us feel right at home. Working with the children and spinal cord

patients was a very rewarding experience and all the patients were very appreciative of our services.

The campus was beautiful, we felt very safe and secure at all times. It was great to be able to spend time with the patients outside of physiotherapy- playing with the children in the evenings and stopping by the spinal cord unit to visit with patients.

I would definitely recommend this placement to future students. I am so glad that we made the decision to go abroad and that we were able to go to such an amazing place like ASSA."

Brooke MacGillivray University of British Columbia, Graduate Student, PT-2013

"The placement was 5 weeks, which is the required length of time through our UBC MPT program. 5 weeks is a perfect amount of time. I worked with Spinal Cord patients in the afternoon and pediatric patients in the morning, as well as a few days doing Village Based Rehab visits. We did rehab independently with the spinal cord patients daily, and worked with other physios to observe treatment in the different areas of rehab. Our Physiotherapy supervisor Ramasubramanian was very understanding and helpful. He always asked us how we were doing and asked us for our feedback regarding the placement.

Becoming a part of the ASSA lifestyle was very fun for us. We felt like family which made the experience very enjoyable for us. This was a wonderful learning experience. It truly challenged me from a cultural standpoint which was the most substantial thing I will take away from my time at ASSA. The people at ASSA and the staff were all so kind and they really made the experience a great one."



Samuel Provost -McGill University, Graduate Student, OT- 2012-2013

"I enjoyed being able to see the kids in their real environment and to spend as much time as I want with them. This is very important information for an occupational therapy. Staying ASSA is very very fun, clean, and good in all domains.

I would say the clinical experience was extremely positive. Seeing and working in all areas of rehab helped me to gather experience faster and would help me to be a better therapist. Flexible schedule, people kindness, being in the natural environment of the patients and the openness and the opportunities to take lead on project were the highlights of my stay at ASSA.-



Michelle Smith University of Alberta, Graduate Student, OT- 2013

"I had an amazing time at ASSA! Almost everyone I encountered at ASSA seemed happy and positive, including the clients. I definitely would recommend that others students go to ASSA for a clinical placement. I loved my experience at ASSA but was sad to leave and felt that I was just beginning to make real connections with others there. I definitely recommend that potential volunteers or clinical placement students spend time at ASSA even if they can only be there for 1 month. For these volunteers and students, I recommend they research all the services that ASSA offers and have an idea which area they are interested in and what they hope to gain from their experience before going."

Katrina Bellerini McGill University, Graduate Student, OT- 2012-2013



"I would definitely recommend this placement because it has done a lot for me both on a professional and personal level. Every person will experience it differently, but regardless of how you experience it, something positive is bound to come from it! I enjoyed everything!!! I have met so many amazing people, both staff and children and people staying here. I have bonded with many of the people and I enjoy the collective aspect of being here. ASSA is like a small village. It is a society of its own. I enjoyed walking from building to building and saying hi to everyone on the way. On a professional level, this placement has allowed me to develop different skills than I would have in Canada. It has taught me how to communicate with my patients and their

families in more efficient ways. It has also allowed me to develop my creativity by having to work with less tools than I would normally have access to.

The chief physiotherapist, Mr. Ramasubramanian was very involved in planning our schedule to ensure that it was as interesting and that we could learn as much as possible. He was always open to our suggestions and proposed new things that he thought would be good when appropriate. He was very friendly throughout the entire 7 weeks we were here. He asked to do a few presentations and case descriptions in front of other therapists so we could practice. He also gave us a few tips on theory when we were unfamiliar with a certain concept. He trusted us and this truly made us feel comfortable and confident working at ASSA!"

Rebecca Wightman University of Toronto , Graduate Student, PT- 2012

"When deciding to go to India for the final clinical internship of my physical therapy program, I anticipated it would be an incredible experience. However, after finishing the five week placement I can say that being at Amar Seva Sangam far exceeded my expectations. Not only was it a great opportunity in terms of experiencing in an exciting and different culture, but it was also an amazing learning experience. I worked with the Spinal Cord Injured patients for five weeks and with the help of the therapists as well as having a lot of opportunity for independent, hands on practice with the patients, I feel I learned so much that I will be able to take back to Canada to put into practice.

Everyone at Amar Seva Sangam is so welcoming and kind. This made it that much harder to say goodbye at the end of the five weeks. I would highly recommend an internship at Amar Seva Sangam to future physical therapy students, especially those who are interested in Pediatrics and/or Neurological practice."



Janna Maclachan Off-site Clinical Supervisor for OT Student Clinical Placements.

In the summer of 2007, I traveled as a volunteer with Handi-Care Intl. to Amar Seva Sangam in India. I saw and learned about more types of disabilities than I would ever see on my occupational therapy placements in Canada. I met people with post-polio syndrome, significantly contracted extremities, stage IV pressure ulcers, club foot and suffering from long-term effects of tuberculosis. I didn't know how much this learning would be helpful to me until I took a position as a Baffin Region Occupational Therapist stationed in Iqaluit, Nunavut where I again saw each of these conditions and situations. Another way this experience provided by Handi-Care Intl. helped me with my work in Nunavut, is learning how different cultures approach disability, and an introduction to what it is like to live with a disability in areas of extreme poverty. Handi-Care Intl. and Amar Seva Sangam provided me with so much more relevant experience that I needed in Nunavut than did the rest of my occupational therapy education, which was executed in an urban Canadian setting. Therefore, I now help facilitate and supervise other OT students through Handi-Care Intl.'s clinical placement program in India in order to provide others with an enriching experience like I had.