Honduras trip gives OSU student new appreciation for family

By TIM THOMAS
Times editor

Bailey Wagner got a new appreciation for family life thousands of miles away from her own family.

It happened while Wagner, a rural Kenton resident and 2014 Ridgemont High School graduate, participated in a study abroad trip to Honduras earlier this summer.

The Ohio State University junior and agriscience major said that in one of the small communities the group visited, she saw a 5-year-old boy untangling fishing net.

“He had the biggest grin on his face because he was helping his family make money. He was getting maybe a cent a week, but he was so happy, he was so happy to be able to help his family,” Wagner said. “That amazed me.”

She said, “We always say family comes first but to see the joy that comes from family is amazing.”

Wagner was among 26 students (20 from OSU and six from Utah State) who traveled to Choluteca, Honduras in May for a study abroad program focused on community development.

The program was a collaborative effort with Utah State University and World Gospel Mission.

During the 16-day program, students learned about Honduran issues related to agriculture, education and international development through community outreach and education about agricultural needs and practices.

An OSU release said the students visited the surrounding communities of Apacigaua, Siete de Mayo, La Bonanza, Boca del Rio Viego, and Nacome. They toured fishing villages, medical facilities, a dairy processing plant, a sugar cane farm, and an agricultural and vocational high schools.

The missionary group has been there for more than 30 years and established the vocational school. In an agricultural class, Wagner said the OSU students worked with the students on growing things.

They also pitched in to help expand facilities, construct sidewalks, a connecting path and a new concrete pad for a future building, she said.

During visits to smaller communities, Wagner said they talked to women about simple health issues and prepared meals. Eggplant grows easily there and she said the students made eggplant parmesan. Another popular item was yuca, which is similar to a potato. In Honduras they shred it like cole slaw, she said.

They served meals at three schools and Wagner noticed some of the students weren’t eating the food.

“Some of these kids were trying to hide their foods to either get more or take home to feel the rest of their family,” she said. “That’s one thing that really struck me. The kids didn’t want to be the greedy ones. They wanted to share with their family.”

During a visit to a sugar cane farm, they came across a 65-year-old man who had worked there since he was 8, and expected to continue there until he dies. He was paid $9 per week.

Even through most of the residents spoke Spanish, Wagner said they found different ways to communicate.

“We were able to have so much fun without speaking a word,” she said.

It was Wagner’s first study abroad experience.

“I loved it there,” she said. “I’m looking to women about other study abroad serving learning trips. This one was a hands-on trip working with the community.”

Preparing dinner

Bailey Wagner of rural Kenton fixes spaghetti for a local school in the village of Apacigaua during her Ohio State University study abroad trip to Honduras earlier this summer.