For Zitterkopf, it was an exam on a woman in her 32nd week of pregnancy that had the deepest impact. “I had never seen a bimanual exam, let alone performed one,” she says. “As I witnessed a physician skillfully perform a bimanual exam . . . he turned to me and asked, ‘Any questions?’ After [I shook] my head ‘no,’ he handed me a glove and said, ‘Good. Your turn.’ I was very nervous.” But the physician guided her through the process. “I was able to feel the head of the fetus,” she recalls. “It was a feeling I will never forget.”

Static: Maureen Shyu was moved by a prenatal visit, too: “Through the static of a Doppler, I heard the thumping of a baby’s heartbeat. It was loud and rapid, so different from my own. . . It was my first time hearing a life growing hidden inside a woman’s belly. Something shifted in me and I recognized it as a special moment in my life.”

For CECS student Clara Savage, working with the FNS was a “wonderful” experience. “There are a lot of pockets of society in this country that are disenfranchised from proper health care,” she says, “and I think that exists in rural Appalachia.”

Susan Linsey, codirector of Dartmouth Rural Health Programs and coordinator of the Kentucky trip, feels it was a great experience for the students who went. They showed “strong team spirit and good bonding,” she says. And FNS officials were pleased, too, she adds. “Frontier Nursing tells us over and over, ‘Please come back.’”

Matthew C. Wiencke