

# HPU athletic trainer treats injuries while sharing the gospel

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BROWNWOOD—Kara Taylor, assistant athletic trainer at [Howard Payne University](#), insists no sports medicine professional would leave home without basic supplies.

"I keep rolls of athletic tape in my car, in my backpack," she said. "It's in our DNA, or maybe it's drilled into us in school."



Kara Taylor (right), assistant athletic trainer at Howard Payne University, demonstrates sports medicine techniques while on a mission trip to Ukraine. (PHOTO/Howard Payne University)

Taylor and other athletic trainers always are prepared to attend to people's

physical injuries. But more important, she has become involved in a ministry that also enables them to address spiritual needs.

Taylor volunteers as director of mobilization and volunteers with the Christian Sports Medicine Alliance, an organization that allows sports medicine professionals the opportunity to share the love of Jesus Christ through their gifts and talents around the world.

She recently returned from mission trips to Costa Rica and Ukraine sponsored by the organization. She had a similar purpose in each country—to share the gospel of Jesus Christ through sports medicine.

"We were able to spend only a week in Costa Rica," she said. "We spoke at the University of Costa Rica and Santa Paula University about the similarities and differences in sports medicine between their country and ours, and we showed them what we do in the field."

The team also demonstrated the importance of proper warm-ups and stretching to members of the University of Costa Rica men's basketball team, a few local soccer teams and a women's fitness group.

Taylor wrote periodic updates to friends, family and supporters of her mission work back home. She shared an experience from a soccer game she attended.

"One girl had been hurt the previous day, and the coach asked if I could take a look at her," Taylor wrote. "She had a muscle strain in her thigh. I was able to explain to her and her family what that meant and how to take care of herself and get better. They were very thankful we were there. We were probably the only sports medicine professionals they had ever met. What a blessing to be able to help others!"

A few weeks after she returned from Costa Rica, Taylor traveled to Ukraine where she spent two weeks working with the local [Fellowship of Christian](#)

[Athletes](#) organization.

The first week in Ukraine, she assisted with the FCA Power Camp for children ages 8 to 16. Five schools and churches participated in the camp, which encompassed lessons in 10 sports.

"The children started every day by warming up and reciting the Lord's Prayer," Taylor said. "Then they would split up into huddles, grouped by ages. They would play sports and have a huddle time of Bible lessons. On the medical side of things, I gave out a few Band-Aids and cleaned up some scrapes and bruises. Praise God there was nothing more serious."

During her second week in Ukraine, Taylor made presentations to government sports medicine professionals in the city of Rivne and at the International University of Economics and Humanities.

"We took six 50-pound bags of donated supplies to leave with them," Taylor said. "It was our way of saying, 'The Lord has blessed us so we can bless you.'"

During her visits to Costa Rica and Ukraine, Taylor was questioned about what it means to be a Christian sports medicine professional.

"We were able to share our testimonies and let the Lord lead how we spoke, without preaching to them," she said.

Mike Jones, HPU's athletic director and Taylor's supervisor, praised her devotion.

"Kara has a heart for missions and a great desire to share Christ through sports medicine," he said. "It is wonderful to see staff members volunteer their time to serve others and spread the gospel. I am very proud of her and glad she is on our staff."

Taylor developed many friendships in Ukraine and Costa Rica she hopes

will last a lifetime. She specifically mentions a young woman named Tanya.

"She knew no English but wanted to learn," Taylor said. "We began learning each other's languages together and became fast friends. We worked on English and Ukrainian between sports, and she sat with me during one of the huddle times at camp. I was able to tell her in Ukrainian that I love her and that I love Jesus Christ.

"The people of Ukraine are open, waiting to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ and feel the love of our Savior. The opportunities for (Christian sports medicine) to be used there in the future are endless."