For weeks, I have not been HOME, a place where students become health teachers and physicians become learners—of suffering, of pain, and of life drudgeries.

HOME is where the sick get tended and the lonely get mended—it’s where hundreds of miles of worn-out shoes, from all walks of life, from all corners of Earth, come for a night of solace and friendship and a peaceful sleep on a bunk bed, slept on by many others before them.

HOME is where they get a quick examination and their physical wounds get tended—their sickness displayed as a teaching tool—but no amount of tender care can heal the mental wounds of being homeless, of being the dust of life—forgotten, abandoned, brushed off.

HOME is where they came and they went and all they left behind is a lasting imprint on the memory of those who had met them.

There is no place like HOME, a place of heartfelt warmth, to which I will soon return.

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Note: The HOME (Health Outreach through Medicine and Education) Project is a program that delivers medical care and preventive education in the Phoenix Valley, Arizona, area. Under the supervision of health care professionals, students from Midwestern University at Glendale, Arizona, provide free acute medical care on a weekly basis to patients at homeless shelters.

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