

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

For Projects Abroad Ecuador 



WHAT'S INSIDE?

- 2 Note by Director
- 3 Teaching story
- 4 Conservation story
- 5 Care story
- 6 Volunteers in action

ProjectsAbroad

Follow us on:



> www.projects-abroad.net

NOTE BY COUNTRY DIRECTOR

Hi, everyone,

July is here again and once more the island is welcoming new volunteers, who are ready to transform the lives of our community by helping teachers in the kindergartens, and primary and secondary schools, teaching sports to children and teenagers, and helping farmers clear their land of invasive species and develop local crops, such as coffee and bananas. The more volunteers we have, the better able we are to help everyone on San Cristobal. We are also starting to paint murals about Galapagos species on walls around the town.

It is not only work, however. Santa Cruz, Floreana and Isabela are islands that are easy to reach and most of our volunteers make a trip to at least one other island. Other less well-known islands can also be explored by day trips from Santa Cruz. The office will help you to arrange short weekend trips to the other islands, or trips from Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, the capital of the Galapagos and main town on San Cristobal Island. It is easy to walk to the Interpretation Centre on the outskirts of town, where you can learn more about the history of the islands, and their flora, fauna, and human inhabitants.

Having volunteers living with the local families is helping to provide them with a stable income which enables them to keep their children in school and have a higher standard of living. Having to use Spanish for day to day living allows our volunteers to brush up on their Spanish, and exposing our young people to English helps them to develop their language skills, too. You will make life-long friends with the locals and volunteers.

If you aren't here already, paradise is waiting for you and its name is San Cristobal Island, a little island in the Pacific Ocean with a very big heart. The whole community is waiting for your arrival.

With thanks to everyone who is making and has made such a difference here.



William Puga
Country Director, Ecuador

MY EXPERIENCE OF TEACHING LOCAL KIDS IN THE GALAPAGOS

By Molly Vertz, USA



After being in San Cristobal for six weeks, I have fallen in love with the island. I have no doubt that it was the best experience of my life. I have been working at the teaching project, teaching English classes to students who are between the ages of 7 and 13 years old. The students are so wonderful, kind and eager to learn. I am always greeted with smiles and even though they can be a handful at times, they are incredible students. Over the past seven weeks, I have noticed significant improvement in their English and it is amazing to see. It is wonderful to be part of a program that is concerned with teaching students English at a young age. I am so glad to be part of such a great program.

My host family has been absolutely amazing. They have gone out of their way to make sure that I am comfortable and happy. They have a beautiful house and my host mother is a wonderful cook. I have had the

chance to get to know her very well and I feel as though I am part of the family. I am so happy to know Spanish and it has been great to practice my Spanish with them. My host mother has told me many times that my pronunciation and comprehension of Spanish has improved a lot since I arrived. We have been going to Zumba classes together in the evenings along with the other volunteer living in our house, which is a lot of fun. My favorite memory with my host family was over the weekend when I went to the house where my host mother grew up on a plantation in the highlands. The other volunteer and I spent a lovely day making coffee with her and spending time with her family.



During my time here, I have been able to meet some really wonderful volunteers from all over the world. It has been fun to get to know so many interesting people. On the weekends we typically go snorkeling or kayaking at the beach. One weekend, five friends and I went to Isabella where we



hiked up a volcano, snorkeled in the lava tunnels, and went cycling. Last weekend, three friends and I went kayaking. It was raining and the weather was very unpleasant but we saw three killer whales! None of us could believe it. Over the past six weeks, I have fallen in love with the incredible wildlife here. When I return home, it will be weird not to see sea lions on the beach!

WORKING TO PRESERVE THE GALAPAGOS ISLAND

By Tizian Ruckenbauer, Austria



At first it seems ridiculous to pay an organization to work. Normally, you get paid for your work.

During my time at the conservation project, I cleaned basins, climbed up slippery terrain, dug holes and spent hours in the sun searching for animals. It was a lot of work; most of the time it was even physically demanding and I would not get paid for it. Why should anyone do this?

However, during my time at the project, I also measured the giant tortoise. I discovered just how fluffy the young rats in the Galapagos Petrel can be, and I studied the behavior of sea lions while we counted them on the beach. I now also know the difference between a banana and a plantain. Honestly, isn't that payment enough?



CARE PROJECT

By Lisa Goeminne, Belgian



"Volunteering with Projects Abroad on a trip to San Cristobal in the Galapagos Islands was one of my first experiences on my own and it was great!"

I have been working at Alejandro School with twenty children around the age of four years old. They have kept me very busy but I still like it. I was an extra pair of hands for the local teacher. I would hand out papers to all of

the children, help wash their hands, play with them and give them attention that was a big part of my job. Sometimes, I gave my own ideas and we made little 'muppets' out of paper, which they just loved! The children played with them for the whole hour. One day, I brought a piano to class that can be rolled up and they had never seen anything like it. We sang the song 'Amarillo' together and each child took turns sitting next to me while I taught them a few things. All in all, it was a lovely morning.

I must say, there isn't a lot of structure at the school and in the classrooms. The children cannot concentrate for a whole hour. The most difficult part for me was communicating in Spanish. I spoke with basic words but understood a lot.

My advice would be to just do it! Don't think too much and have fun.



VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION



Louise-Helene Blais, assisting a professor at the English class in a local school



Volunteers of conservation fill out plastic bags with compost in GNP Nursery



Volunteers of conservation transplanting Galapagos Organic Coffee at the nursery, to later do reforestation in some protected areas.



Mayou, a volunteer in the Care Project controlling activities of the children

Volunteers practicing dialogues with tourism class.

