

# Galapagos Newsletter



Ardea cocoi

Enjoying a refreshing shower

# Hi, everyone!

We have had another busy month. With the help of our dedicated, talented volunteers we are building a bathroom for one of the families on the island. We hope to develop our activities by providing volunteers if anyone wants help in their home or gardens, or if the local farmers need workers on their small farms. Projects Abroad Galapagos aims to help the whole community, whether we are teaching English, art, drama or music, training our young people to be better footballers, and/or basketball players, helping out in the kindergartens and Special Needs Centre, or working on conservation projects in the Highlands or around town. We are keeping the beaches and town clean and tidy, and generally developing conservation and environmental projects.

As always, the whole community thanks all the volunteers who come here to work with us, and we will always be grateful for the fact that so many people from so many different parts of the world are willing to give up their holidays to make a difference to this small island and its inhabitants, whether human or not.

Last but not least, we would also like to thank all the families on the island who open up their homes to our volunteers and the islanders who also volunteer with us, enabling all our projects to run smoothly.

All the best to each and every one of you.



William  
Country Director  
Projects Abroad Galapagos



# HELPING A FAMILY IN NEED



## CREDITS

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# AN EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME

By Nicole Krzemiski, USA - Teaching and Conservation - 1.5 months



Seven weeks ago, I arrived in San Cristóbal - confused, tired and excited to begin my journey. Now after living in the Galápagos for seven weeks, I can call it my home. I am sad to be leaving on Saturday, but I am happy to know that I will look back on this experience and only have positive memories. Everyone on this island, and in this archipelago, is so friendly. I have met wonderful people while being here, including Projects Abroad staff, other volunteers, adorable children, my incredible host family, and all of the locals. I feel welcome everywhere I go. Not only do I know most faces around the small town, but it is also an amazing feeling to walk outside and hear "Teacher Nicki!" from down the street.

I originally came to the Galápagos to expand my Spanish education and enhance my understanding of South American culture. That has definitely happened, but I have also experienced a lot more than just



that. Throughout my time here, I have taught children every day in the mornings and afternoons. Every morning, Monday through Friday, I taught dance at a local elementary school to children aged 7-14, in 13 different classes throughout the week. It was very difficult to keep their attention at times, but the kids lit up my life.

Every afternoon I also taught three English classes, to groups of smart, but wild children at the Projects Abroad office. I always had a co-teacher helping me, and together we taught everything from simple vocabulary to complicated grammar. We gave them a test every Monday to make sure that they understood the material, and then we most likely reviewed the same material the next day, to make sure that they really understood. We laughed, we sang, and we worked, but no matter what we were doing or how the children were acting, I was happy to be there and happy to know that I was making an impact in their lives, whether it was big or small.

In addition to seven weeks of teaching, I participated in a week of the conservation project. We worked with the Galapagos National Park in the Galapaguera (the tortoise reserve) one day, and we also worked on the green house, weeding, planting, and building a nursery for plants. It was definitely tiring (and difficult to make it through three hours of teaching later that day), but it was satisfying to see the progress that we made day-to-day. I am glad that I had the chance to play a part in conserving this island, because it is very important to the community.





In my spare time (not that I had much), I went to the beach, went out with friends, travelled to other islands, and learned how to scuba dive. Learning to dive was one of my favourite decisions while being here. I took the open water PADI scuba diving course with Galapagos Underwater. Being underwater is a whole different world. I loved doing shallow dives, but we also dived at a beautiful ship-wreck, and I was able to dive 20 meters at Kicker Rock. I now hope to dive around the world.

San Cristóbal has a lot to offer - from walking along beautiful beaches and snorkelling, to zip lining and horseback riding in the Highlands.



Apart from travelling around San Cristóbal, I loved going to other islands. I went on weekend trips to Santa Cruz and Isabela with friends. We stayed in cheap, nice, hostels and visited the popular sites there.

The boat rides on the large ocean were rough, but everything was beyond beautiful and so much fun. I personally like San Cristóbal the best, but I'm biased. It really is a true paradise here in the Galápagos. There is always a cool breeze off the ocean, and every day has a mixture of warm sun and on-and-off light rain. The animals, including sea lions, turtles (land and sea), iguanas, birds, fish, sharks, rays, penguins and flamingos coexist with each other and the humans around them. The sea lions sleep along the Malécon in San Cristóbal and bark at you if you get too close. There is nothing like seeing these animals in their natural habitat, and knowing that they are happy living here.



It is unbelievable that these seven weeks have flown by so fast. I like to rewind in my head back to the first day I arrived and walk through every moment, over and over again. I know memories fade, but I hope that this is one that lasts for a lifetime.



# MY EXPERIENCE IN THE CARE PROJECT

By Aimee Hartwell, USA – Care - 6 months



Never would I have imagined being able to call the Galapagos Islands “home,” but after 3 months living and working on the island of San Cristobal, that is absolutely what it feels like. It was so refreshing to be welcomed into this loving, relaxed, and sea lion-filled community. I have spent the past 3 months working at a local pre-school in a classroom of 4-year olds. While at times it has been challenging, these particular children have sure found their way into my heart.

It is quite a rewarding feeling to have 24 4-year olds yell my name and greet me with hugs when I come into their class in the morning. My job in the classroom is essentially an extra pair of hands for the



teacher. Often times the class can get out of control and it is helpful to have more adults to help take charge. I’m very glad that I am here in the classroom for a substantial amount of time because it gives me the opportunity to connect with the students as well as the teacher. I have already seen the growth and progress that the students have made over the past few months. During my time here, I have also tried to implement a few behaviour incentive programs in the classroom. They are a work in progress but it has been fun trying new ideas that will work with this particular population.

I was so fortunate to be placed with an incredible host family. They have welcomed me with open arms as a member



of their family. They go above and beyond what is necessary to make sure I feel at home. My host family experience has definitely affected my overall experience in the most positive way. They have included me in many family activities and have really treated me as a family member rather than just a guest.



During my free time here, I have had the opportunity to explore this incredible and beautiful part of the world. I have explored all over the island of San Cristobal, as well as travelled to a couple of other nearby islands. I am also so lucky to have been able to get PADI Scuba Dive certified in this beautiful place. I have just started exploring the world famous underwater life of the Galapagos and I can't wait to see more!

Overall, this has really been a wonderful experience and I have had the opportunity to meet many great people from all over the world, including many people from the local community. It is nice to meet passionate people who dedicate themselves to volunteering and creating experiences for themselves! I look forward to what my next three months here on the Galapagos Islands have to offer!



# SPORT PROJECTS AT A LOCAL FOOTBALL SCHOOL

By Henry Peters - Germany - Sport - 1 month



During my four weeks' stay on the Galapagos Islands, I had the privilege of experiencing a different culture from my own and working and living with lovely people who see different values in life from the people in the West.

I started working as an assistant coach at the San Cristobal Football School, following instructions and helping the head coaches do their work. Every day was a day full of joy and much laughter and I got along really well with the children, whether they were 5 years old, or 15. After 2 weeks I finally had a chance to fully plan practice sessions on my own, as one of the head coaches went travelling. For a whole week I had to set up schemes, talk to the children and present my ideas to them. What supported me was that I brought a book from Germany with many different training exercises.

By the end of my volunteer work, the kids had grown really close to me and were sad

to hear that I was leaving. This was a rather touching moment, but I took lots of photos with them and will always remember the fantastic time and experiences I had working with these children.



Apart from volunteer work, I had the opportunity to travel to different islands



with my fellow volunteers and got to see what I came here for as well: the



magnificent nature of the Galapagos.

Before I arrived, I did not expect so many volunteers to be working here, so I was very happy to see that on the social scale I could make lots of contacts and new friends. After coming home from work, we would always meet up and go out together to the beaches, restaurants, and bars, or just for walks around the area. I will always remember them too, as it is very important to be socially connected when going abroad.

My host family was one of the kindest and most warm-hearted group of people I have ever met. They really cared for me and gave me the feeling of being at home. Each and every one of them contributed to making me feel welcome and I really hope that I can come back to the Galapagos one day and visit them again.



# Volunteers Taking Part in Different Activities and Their Placement Projects



# GROUP ACTIVITIES



Congratulations for your outstanding performances.

If you have any suggestions about our work, please contact [ecuador@projects-abroad.org](mailto:ecuador@projects-abroad.org).

Best wishes from Ecuador!