

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

For Projects Abroad Ecuador



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NOTE BY COUNTRY DIRECTOR

Hi everyone,

September has arrived and the summer holidays are over in Western countries so we have fewer visitors on the island. It has been a busy summer with the most volunteers that we have ever had. Local families are feeling the benefits of having volunteers living with them and, thanks to their support, are now able to improve their living conditions.

Our art projects are developing wonderfully and our youngsters are enjoying them very much. They have been so successful that the local schools are going to integrate art into their syllabi. The walls around town are testament to their skills as artists. Our music project volunteers are also going to help to develop a percussion band with the young people on the island. Dance classes are also proving to be very popular.

As for our teaching project, we continue to teach English to more than a hundred youngsters in the afternoon at our centre. We find that the enthusiasm and commitment of volunteers more than makes up for formal qualifications in teaching. It is great for our students to be exposed to speaking English with the many volunteers who come here. It is a two-way process: volunteers teach our children English and our children teach them Spanish!

All in all, it has been another great month with sports and conservation projects also continuing to develop. Thank you everyone and we look forward to welcoming you to San Cristobal Island and the Galapagos if you have never visited before. For those of you who have been here, we hope that you return in the near future.

Thank you.



William Puga
Country Director, Ecuador

MY EXPERIENCE TEACHING LOCAL KIDS IN THE GALAPAGOS: IMPROVING MY SPANISH BY TEACHING ENGLISH

By THERESA SIESKSMEIER, GERMANY

My name is Theresa Sieksmeier, I am 21 years old and I have been living on San Cristobal Island as a volunteer for Projects Abroad for the last 4 weeks. I chose the teaching project and was placed in Alejandro Humboldt High School. My schedule is from Monday to Friday from 8am to 12.20pm. I support a local teacher, Lider Mendoza, and help him with his daily classes. As a teacher, you have to work closely with the students, who are aged from 14-19 years old in my case. To help them to improve their English skills, you have to speak to them to improve their oral performance, correct and grade their homework, support if they have any questions (and they do have a lot of questions) and help to teach them grammar. After several weeks, you will recognize that they try really hard and that you really can change things. Your work doesn't just help the students but you will also help your teacher and they will be glad to have you around. However, it's not too much work! In the evenings, you will find enough time to spend time with your host family and the other volunteers.



Being with a host family is also important because it will help you to improve your Spanish. My host family consists of a mother, three children aged from 9 to 16, a dog and three, or sometimes even more, cats. I've never been to a host family that is as friendly and open-minded as my family here is. The balance between caring for you and treating you as a member of their family is perfect. They provide 3 meals per day, wash your laundry and give you your own room, with a bed, a cupboard and a little table. Spend some time with them and they will never forget you.



In general, the people here are the friendliest in the world. It's normal for them to greet you in the streets, whether you know them or not. That makes it quite easy to integrate. At the weekend, you can always go out with the other volunteers because it is a close community and nobody has to be alone here.

You can go out partying, to the beaches or on several trips together. You can go snorkeling, diving, surfing or zip lining; there are a lot of things to do on San Cristobal! There is no time to be bored. However, if you plan to go snorkeling at Punta Pitt or Kickers Rock, you have to go there by boat. Take care as sometimes the waves are really huge and you can get seasick. That happened to me the first time I went snorkeling at Punta Pitt but it was worth it as I got to see sea turtles, beautiful fish, sea lions and even sharks.

I will stay here for three more weeks and I am curious about what I haven't discovered yet.



CARE PROJECT

by Jens Gangdal, Norway



I have been working at the care project on San Cristobal Island for four weeks now, and so far the experience has been great! I work at a school in the middle of the city and my class consists of 21 children aged between 3 and 4 years old. My role is that of an assistant to the teacher. I help her to keep the class quiet, to make sure all the children do their work, to eat their lunch and to pay attention when the teacher is talking. I also have to comfort children who fall and cry. She is giving me more and more responsibility though and I feel that my work here is appreciated.

The lifestyle is very different from what I am used to. The children eat desserts for lunch! Lunchboxes contain popcorn, jelly, chocolate and soda so the children have a lot of energy! There is never a quiet moment in the five hours a day I work but, then again, it is never boring either.

My biggest fear when starting my work here was that I didn't speak any Spanish. However, I realized that the best way to learn Spanish is with children! None of the teachers speak English so I didn't really have any choice but to learn by doing. By paying attention when the teacher speaks, I have now built up my Spanish vocabulary so that I can communicate just fine with the children.



My teacher is very creative in her planning for activities for the children. Every day we have different art projects using many different materials. We also go on various field trips. Today we took a bus ride to the other side of the island to look at and learn about turtles.

I highly recommend working at the care project with Projects Abroad on San Cristobal Island. It is an amazing place to live and every single day is an adventure. When you work in care, your day ends at 12.30pm every day so you have a lot of free time to go to the beach, snorkel, dive and take part in all the other different activities that the islands have to offer.
¡Hasta Luego!

CREATIVE ART PROJECT

by Jana Meier, Germany

White sand, deep blue water, an amazing view of lazy sea lions and a pencil in my hand while forgetting the time. That is what every artist needs; freedom.

My name is Jana Meier and I am 19 years old. I have been here for almost three weeks now and every day is as exciting as the first day I arrived on San Cristobal Island.

My first day at the art project was really interesting as ten little children between the ages of 5 and 6 years old were screaming around me and wanted to be entertained for 45 minutes. Luckily, there was another volunteer who accompanied me. In the end, everyone was happy but two of us had a headache. After one week, we got another class with almost fourteen children aged from 8 to 9 years old.

All in all, I can say that it doesn't matter how crazy the children are. They are just children who really love doing crafts and being creative. It's lovely to see that the children are getting better each day and are proud of the masterpieces they make. This makes me happy too, especially when I feel that they appreciate the time you are spending with them.

Speaking in Spanish is not a problem as my host family is very friendly and helps me out whenever possible even though I only know a little.

These three weeks have been amazing and I am happy that I still have two more as every day is different and I am always learning new things.

I am really looking forward to telling my family and friends about the amazing experiences I have had during my time here. I think there will be much more to tell than just snorkeling with huge turtles and sea lions, and zip lining in the highlands.



Photo Page



Getting ready to paint a high school

Getting ready for work



William and the Ganchi family

