

Lindsey Shrier – Foreign Language Essay Contest Winner 2013

Last summer, I went on a trip to Costa Rica with the Girl Scouts Destinations program. I spend two weeks surfing in the mornings, and doing community service in the afternoons. I learned about culture, through cooking and music. I made new friends from other countries. I was able to make a difference because of my ability to speak another language. Languages in Quincy are creating global links through providing opportunities for an exchange in culture, friendship, and community service for their students.

While in Costa Rica, knowing Spanish gave me a chance to really experience the local culture. A family who lived near our campsite offered to come over and teach us how to cook tamales. All in Spanish, they gave us directions on how to spoon rice, peppers, and onions into a dough filled banana leaf. Cooking traditional food while speaking the traditional language helped me grasp what Costa Rican culture was like. We learned about the Costa Rican belief in "Pura Vida," which meant living life to the fullest while appreciating family, friends, and nature. Every night, we would turn on a Spanish radio station and belt out the words. Through the languages we shared, we were able to create global links by learning about other cultures.

During my trip to Costa Rica, I made friendships that will last a lifetime. While several girls were also from the United States, I also became friends with girls from Mexico, Brazil, and Nicaragua. We took turns speaking English and Spanish to each other, and while our grammar and pronunciations were not always perfect, our ability to share a common language gave us the chance to really get to know each other. Learning a foreign language at Quincy High gave me this opportunity. When someone takes the time to learn about another person's language and culture, both people respect each other more. Learning another language lets people understand and communicate with others, giving them the chance to create global links.

Part of the Outward Bound program was about giving back into the community. We were lucky enough to go surfing, zip lining, and white-water rafting in Costa Rica. It was our turn to give back to community that had given us so much. We helped paint a small restaurant near our campsite, and by speaking Spanish to the owners, we were able to accomplish the task efficiently and effectively. By being able to speak another language, I was able to give back. Students in

Quincy Public Schools have the chance to do the same because of the language skills they have learned in class.

Students in Quincy Public Schools are fortunate to have the advantage of learning another language in class. This opens the door for global leadership, as learning about other cultures and forming new friendships heavily contribute to respect and tolerance of others. By learning another language, Quincy students are able to connect with others globally, by utilizing their language skills to give back to other communities. Learning a language helped me create global links through experiencing culture, gaining new friendships, and doing community service.