

Galapagos Newsletter



Butorides sundevalli

The famous Galapagos heron is called guaque by the local people.



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July 2013

NEWS FROM THE GALAPAGOS!

Another busy month has passed on San Cristobal Island. We are continuing with our conservation, care and English projects, as well as developing our art and music ones. We have our second family here and more volunteers than ever. The combination of the Galapagos, volunteering, conservation work and summer holidays in the northern hemisphere means that we are experiencing our most successful month ever. We have also managed to send two teenagers to the UK to study English in summer school, so our connection with the outside world is a two way process. Our volunteers are making a huge difference to island life and the whole community thanks you all for coming here.



William Puga
Country Director

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FAMILIES AT WORK



SPORTS PROJECT (Football Stadium)

By Marc Eymann - Germany - 3 Months



The first day I arrived in the Galapagos, I got picked up at the airport and Daniela took me to my family. My host-mother was already waiting at the door to show me my room and the house. At 3pm Daniela picked me up to show me my placement at the stadium.

When I got there, two teachers were waiting for me, who showed me around the stadium, introduced the materials given for the training sessions and also told me how many children are in the “Escuela de Futbol San Cristobal.”

Then I went to the field where we trained the 4 to 7 year-olds from 3 pm to 4 pm and the 7 to 9 year-olds from 4 pm to 5.30 pm. We had the children aged 9 - 12 in a group

of 35 children. At the beginning, I just watched to see how it works and then



began to get more and more involved. Also from 4 pm to 6 pm the other training was held with the oldest ones from 13 – 16, while we had the younger ones.

After the first week, one coach left for a trip for three weeks, so another volunteer and I were alone with the oldest children aged from 13 to 16.

We had to prepare interesting 2 hour training sessions. We had the same children every day during the week for 2 hours, so every day we taught a special topic: Monday - Power, Tuesday - Technique, Wednesday - Tactics, Thursday - Shooting, and Friday - Game.

We separated the groups again into younger and older, so we had 10 students in each group, instead of having 20, so they were easier to handle.

After the three weeks, when the teacher came back to work, I did not work with the oldest ones anymore. I joined the group aged from 9 - 12 to help the other teacher because this group has more than 35 children. When we finished our training at 5.30 pm, we trained the older guys until 7 pm.

During my two months on the sports project, I got involved in financial work as well and took part in meetings about the future of the football school.

All in all, I have had an amazing experience until now. I already feel a little like a football coach and also a bit sad because I will only be working for 2 more weeks at the school.



Greetings

Marc

MY EXPERIENCE TEACHING ENGLISH

By Cassandra Lee - United States - 2 Months



If I had to sum up my experience as a volunteer with Projects Abroad Galapagos in one word, it would be “surprising.” Having previously been a student on San Cristobal Island, I thought I knew at least a little about how the culture, people, and daily life in the Galapagos functioned. To find out so many new things and meet so many great people has been unexpected. As with any trip, my stay so far has had its ups and downs. I’m sure many of my fellow volunteers and students may recall seeing me crying quite a bit over my problems at home in the United States during one of my first weeks here. However, anyone would be hard-pressed to find a group of people who would and could be more supportive than the community here. Even with a bit of a language handicap (I can speak

Spanish, but I definitely struggle to find words when I’m emotionally stressed), I was able to find immense amounts of comfort offered not only by the other volunteers, but also by my host family, and most surprisingly, by my students. It is for those children that I am here, and whose kind, eager, earnest minds have convinced me that I am in love with this place. Knowing that I was coming to teach English, I was nervous. I’m young, and small, and I was unsure how I would be able to handle a classroom. I’ll be honest, it hasn’t always been easy, and it’s often been downright stressful, but more than that, teaching here, and having the opportunity to learn from the perspectives of all my wonderful students, has always been a pleasant surprise.



CONSERVATION IN THE GALAPAGOS

By Taryn Derosia - United States - 2 months



Before summer started, I had decided that I wanted to do something unforgettable with my summer. I soon stumbled across Projects Abroad which seemed like a good organisation to become a part of. I selected the Galapagos because I liked what the programme is doing here and also the amazing location.

After having been here for a little less than 2 months, I have had some great experiences. The part that I will remember most is living with a local family. My first day here I didn't think this would be the case. It felt almost impossible to communicate with them. I had taken some formal Spanish classes in school, but I now felt like I knew absolutely nothing! Over the course of my time here, I have spent time listening to my family and attempting to speak myself. I feel more confident in my ability to understand Spanish and even speak a little too! I also love the feeling of having a family here in the Galapagos to



come home to and enjoy my meals with. It gives a feeling of a home away from home.

Back home I am an environmental science major, so coming here to do conservation work was right up my alley! Since my arrival here, I have taken part in invasive species removal, worked with coffee plants, helped in the construction of community nurseries, and worked with some animals such as giant tortoises and marine iguanas.



The project I have found to be the most important to me is our work with coffee plants. They start off in a nursery up in the Highlands where the seeds are planted and cared for until they are about six months old. Then they are donated to local farms to plant on their land. Since my first day here, I have been working with them. I have organised them, helped cut out land for them to be grown on, and then transported and planted them in the ground. I think that this programme is very important because many of the owners of these farms don't have the finances to hire workers. It took about fifteen people four hours to cut out the invasive plants out of one farmer's land and another four hours to plant 200 plants. Without our help this would have taken so much time! I feel that by giving these farmers means to grow their own crops and sustain themselves off the profit,

it will encourage a more eco-friendly lifestyle and create less of a need to depend on harmful industries such as tourism, which can cause a lot of damage to the environment.

Another project that I think is exciting is the development of a new nursery close to town that will help with community education on environmental issues in the Galapagos, such as invasive and endemic plants. Students and families will be able to easily visit this location. For the Galapagos to be sustainable and eco-friendly, the whole community needs to be a part of it, so hopefully this nursery can help educate the community about small things they can do to live in a more environmentally friendly way.

I have also met some amazing people here! I have spent my time with local people, and volunteers from Canada, France, Sweden, Japan, Germany, and many other countries. Not only have I had the opportunity to spend time in a country completely different from my own, but I have also spent time with people from all over the world. With these people I have shared many fun experiences, from just going to the bars in town and hanging out on the beach, to cliff jumping in Santa Cruz, and snorkelling through volcanic tunnels on Isabela.

Leaving in two weeks' time, I'm excited about getting to see my friends and family once again, but I will miss the adventures that I have had here, the friends I have made, and the hard work I've done. This summer was the most memorable summer of my life. I have learned so much about myself and the world around me.



VOLUNTEERS TAKING PART IN DIFFERENTS ACTIVITIES



SOCIAL AFTER WORK



Congratulations for your outstanding performances.

If you have any suggestions about our work, please contact ecuador@projects-abroad.org.

Best wishes from Ecuador!