

Mercedes Rodriguez

Report #2

My 4-H IFYE experience began in May 2012 when I first heard about it. From that point on I was determined that I would go on this exchange to another country to experience life outside of what I know to be "normal." At first I was unsure of where I wanted to go until I picked my first choice of Africa and my second as Argentina. I am extremely glad I picked Argentina and I wouldn't change it for the world.

My month long stay was in Lincoln, Buenos Aires, Argentina. In my family I had my mom, dad, sister, a younger brother and another brother who was in Wisconsin while I was in his home. My family was your typical modern Argentine family. Although just like any family there were some bumpy roads but everything was amazing and I didn't feel like the crazy foreigner.

I would like to just share some of the good and bad times I had while I was there. First, with the good; my most favorite experience I had was in the beginning when I was being asked about my pet pig. I was unsure of the word they were using which was chancho. I was determined I didn't have one of those, until my host sister gets on all fours and begins oinking; at that moment I was certain I had a pig. This experience with my sister acting out a pig showed me I had a long month ahead of me acting out a lot of what we were trying to talk about. Another of my best memories was bonding for the first time with my host sister. After a long week and a half of feeling like she wasn't in favor of me being there we had our first bonding night where we talked about life, boys, and teenage girl things.

Thinking back now I don't think they were huge problems but at the time they happened I felt like it was the end of my fun experience. As my host brother was in Wisconsin, my mom cried for him a lot. Sometimes I felt like I couldn't do or say anything all day because I didn't want to make her cry. In the end I realized that she was just being a mom with her son on the other side of the world.

At the end of my trip I was NOT ready to come back to the life I was living. A few nights before leaving I stayed up talking to my sister planning ways that I could stay, like if it was that easy!?

Now I've been back in the states I catch myself doing something naturally as I would in Argentina. I know that in this little story you didn't hear all of my adventures. If you would like to talk with me personally I would love to share my story with you.

Something I would like to leave for those thinking about taking an IFYE trip is this: Don't let your dreams JUST be dreams. Always try new things, even here in the states. Always remember that if it isn't something you like you don't have to try it again.

Mercedes Rodriguez
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