

MY LAYER



Hannah Cail (6)

"[The questions I hate answering most are] math questions."

MY LAYER



Caroline Brown (9)

"[My biggest pet peeve is] probably when people chew with their mouths open. It's pretty nasty."

INSIDE LOOKING OUT Sebastian Neville talks with children from Chirripo, Costa Rica after a six-hour hike through the jungle. "They were so glad to see us there," Neville said. "I will always love and miss Chirripo." Neville followed the kids inside to attend an art festival put on by the elementary school. *Photo by Nicole Crowley.*



GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

Design by Minna Autry.

Students share Christ's love

with indigenous Costa Rican village

CHILDREN with greasy hair and stained clothing waited in line for a sip of water from the underground faucet. Dirty rain boots lined the exterior of the pink, one-roomed schoolhouse. Laughter rang out from the building as local children danced to Jennifer Lopez's "On the Floor." Wild hogs and roosters roamed the schoolyard in search of scraps.

As the mission team consisting of seven Americans approached the schoolhouse, local children crowded the doorway to get a better look. The children paused their cultural performances to introduce themselves and guide the Americans to their seats in the back of the room.

After greeting the mission team, the children went back to showing off their talents and artwork at the local art festival.

"It was incredible to see how passionate and creative they were doing things such as rapping Christian songs, writing poetry, playing guitars and singing, and performing original skits,"

Evan Gaylord (12) said. "I think we as a group showed them the love of Christ and made the obvious effort to visit and spend time with them, which I'm sure meant the world to these people."

As the performances concluded, the children filed out of the schoolhouse. Ashlyn Bragg (11), Nicole Crowley (11), and chaperone Bryce Bielec followed the younger kids to their classroom. Despite the language barrier, the mission team taught them how to create Vacation Bible School crafts.

"[The kids] gathered in and we did two different activities with them," Bragg said. "It was a bit challenging explaining how to do the project in Spanish, and we used a lot of hand signals to communicate and understand [the children]. Nicole and I used a lot of exaggerated facial expressions [to communicate], but it was still so much fun interacting with the kids."

The little kids exchanged fist bumps and high fives as they departed for lunch. The

mission team sat in awe as they thought about the excitement and chaos they just experienced. They not only gave attention to the local children, but also obtained their own humble mindset after witnessing a totally different way

"It is obvious that they have a better grasp on who God is than we do. They actually get what it means to be grateful for what they have and how to love one another,"

Evan Gaylord (12)

They actually get what it means to be grateful for what they have and how to love one another," Gaylord said. "It truly is a village lifestyle with everyone there looking out for one another and taking care of each other's needs. As Christians, we know there are other people all over the world that worship God too, but being able to personally see that and take part in it as well was just such an amazing blessing." *Story by Nicole Crowley.*



A BUTTERSWEET GOODBYE The Costa Rica mission group pauses for a picture before setting off on their journey to the city of Tuis. "We spent time at the elementary and high school, playing with the kids and celebrating their art festival," Evan Gaylord (12) said. The group also played soccer with the people of the village, ages ranging from five to 19 years old. *Photo provided by Costa Rica Mission Team*

ZIP LINES Alumna Ashley Keller (class of 2016) waits her turn as Ashlyn Bragg (11) sits in ready-position on the zip line. "We had to drive down a long dirt road to get there, and it was kind of sketchy at first. I was terrified," Bragg said. "But our zip line route took us through a rain forest and it was beautiful." The travelers took a zip lining trip on the Friday before they arrived home. *Photo by Minna Autry.*

AN ERUPTION OF FUN Minna Autry (12) participates in a paddle boarding trip on Lake Arenal in the city of La Fortuna. "I had never seen a volcano in person before. It was unreal," Autry said. When they got back onto the boat they ate watermelon and pineapple and learned the history of the lake and volcano. *Photo provided by Costa Rican Mission Team.*



PHRASES ON THE GO

Travelers share Spanish phrases picked up during trip



MINNA AUTRY (12)

"Voy a planchar mis orejas."

"I am going to iron my ears or I am going to sleep."



LAURA BIELEC

"Que pasa mai?" or "Que pasa mop?"

"What's up bro or what's up cuz?"



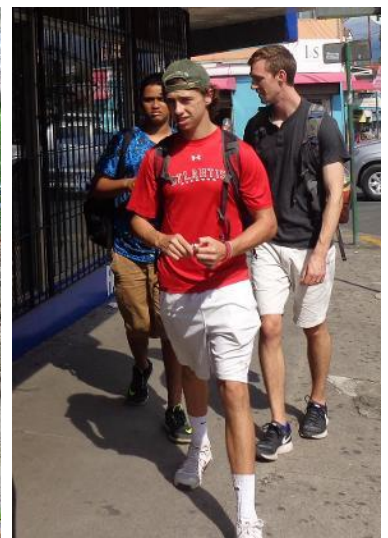
ASHLYN BRAGG (11)

"Pura Vida"

"Pure Life"



MONKEYING AROUND Nicole Crowley (11) feeds a wild monkey on Cahuita Beach. "I was so excited to feed a wild monkey, but I was worried that it would get sick from eating human food and not want to find food on its own after we left," Crowley said. After Crowley, each traveler took turns giving the monkey a handful of fruit and granola. *Photo by Laura Bielec.*



TRAVELIN' TEENS Evan Gaylord (12) roams the streets of Turrialba with the other travelers. "When we were in the city we walked through a huge market that was almost like a tunnel. It sold all kinds of things, from fruits to toys to knives," Gaylord said. "It was really unique." The group was on their own for the day in a foreign city. *Photo by Laura Bielec.*