

Not all of the students volunteered at the daycare. Both Sarah Rodriguez and Morgan chose to go and volunteer at a care center where they spent their two weeks helping nurses with elderly patients. "We basically assisted the caregivers and other staff with many of their daily tasks. Sometimes direct care of the residents with their ADL's (activities of daily living) like shaving, toileting and feeding. It was a lot of fun to be able to get to know each resident, make special connections and see their smiles as we returned each day," said Rodriguez.

Apart from volunteering, these CCC students also had the chance to experience the Costa Rican culture. They got to meet a lot of people. They went out dancing, tried local food and attended the festival of lights Christmas parade where they got to experience traditional dance and music. The festival ended with a huge fireworks display that lit up the city. One of their favorite cultural activities was the chocolate making. They got to learn how the cacao seed is grown and finally got to make chocolate for themselves. Another experience they got to try out was getting to go out to a coffee plantation. There, they learned just how long it takes to grow coffee and getting to see the process of how a seed turns to a coffee bean and then to a cup of hot coffee. It takes roughly about 3 to 4 years to get from a seed to a cup of coffee.

"The part of the Diria Coffee Tour that I enjoyed the most was learning hands on about how much energy goes into growing,

harvesting, and producing a single coffee bean," said student Jessica Palmer.

The weekend marked the halfway point for them. The group went to Rincon de La Vieja National Park. There they tubed down a river, zip lined and rode horses through a forest. "It was so much fun to be with everyone and to see people experience so many first-time things in their lives," said Curry.

The students met many local people that made their stay in Costa Rica more fun. Locals gave them Spanish lessons, city tours and their personal recommendations, which was a big help trying to find their way around a new country. "Getting to know the people there while getting to participate in a huge part of the culture. I thought it was really fun to experience life down there in an active and exciting way," said Brooklyn Olsen, a first-year CCC student who partook in this trip.

Being in a different country for the first time can be scary, especially if you don't know the language. "I think the hardest part for me was not speaking the language and whenever a difficult situation arose, I wasn't able to handle it myself because I couldn't understand," said Olsen.

Students also took their time there to learn more about themselves. "It really pushed me out of my comfort zone and made me realize I could handle things I didn't think I could before," added Ramsey.

If you are interested in traveling abroad, set up an appointment with your counselor to see what classes are available for study abroad.



On the fourth day of their trip, the students participated in a pottery workshop run by Andyy Campos, a fourth generation Guaitil resident, a member of the Chorotega tribe, who runs a pottery shop in the Diria District of Santa Cruz.



On the eleventh day of the trip, the students were taught the local Guanacastan folk dance. After watching two examples of the dance, the instructor walked the students through the steps for two more songs.



Students sit outside the Cross Cultural Solutions home base in Santa Cruz. Throughout the country, nature is allowed to grow without much resistance, even in cities such as Santa Cruz. Civilization is built around nature, adapting to it, rather than cutting through it.