



February 2010
¡Saludos!

I am really excited to let you know that I am going back to Latin America this summer with Amigos de las Americas. I am also excited to ask for your support again! This letter will probably seem familiar. You most likely received a similar one last winter. If you did, you know that through my love of Spanish and travel, I discovered an amazing nonprofit organization called Amigos de las Americas. Last summer, I spent the best 8 weeks of my life living with a host family in a town called Los Jovillos in the Dominican Republic. There, I worked very closely with the town's youth group, carrying out a community-elected project, teaching sports and games day camps, and immersing myself in the culture of the vibrant island.

I had such an empowering experience that I decided to continue my work with AMIGOS. This year I am on the Peninsula Chapter Training Staff. I serve as a mentor for the new generation of volunteers and train them for their summer. I love being able to strengthen my leadership skills. I am also preparing for my second summer as a volunteer!

Amigos focuses on promoting youth empowerment, multicultural understanding and community development by providing leadership training and community service opportunities to youth in Latin America and the United States. In thirty-seven chapters across the United States, volunteers learn about interpersonal skills and other lessons that we will bring in-country. As part of the Peninsula Chapter, we do over 100 hours of training as well as participating in a tutoring program. All this is preparation for the summer when volunteers (over 600 in the United States and some international volunteers) will be sent in pairs to a small community in Latin America for six to eight weeks to work with the community on a project and do educational activities.

I found out my country assignment last week. I will be spending my summer as a volunteer in Oaxaca, Mexico. My project will focus on community nutrition, and using amaranth, a local grain, for cooking purposes.

Amigos relies on fundraising to support our projects. Every dollar makes a difference and you can be that difference! I've included an envelope, so all you have to do is sign, lick, seal, and send the contribution back to me. Your money, your support goes towards making the dreams of Amigos come true. What you donate goes towards supplies for projects in country and scholarships for Amigos in the Peninsula chapter. You can also donate online via our website: www.amigospeninsula.org.

I have had the best experiences with Amigos, and I hope you can share those again with me, and with this year's volunteers! It only takes one person to make that difference.

Sincerely,

Lucia "Shaya" Christensen