

Costa Rica Team Journal

Sunday, Day 2

Thought for the day: "Teach us delight in simple things." – Rudyard Kipling

Another blue sky morning. Several chose to begin their day by running, while others started with a breakfast buffet at the Orquideas Inn. The morning informational meeting was led by Gina – it was quick and informative with a break for lunch, followed by another short session. Then we boarded the bus at 1 p.m. for our departure to Monteverde/Santa Elena – a 3 ½-hour ride.

We check into the inn in Santa Elena, which will be our home for the next two weeks. Next came an orientation to the town and a departure for Cebadilla where we were hosted by the Global Volunteers Committee comprised of a member from each of the volunteer groups of the village.

Dinner was lovely, followed by dancing and greetings from each team member and the local people we will be sharing our time with.

Monday, Day 3

Thought for the day:

"Doing the ordinary things, extraordinarily well." John D. Rockefeller's definition of success

It's Christmas Day – a day that most spend with their families. Here, today, in Santa Elena, 14 amazing individuals have converged in the true meaning of Christmas – to come together and help another.

Although we didn't spend the day working in Cebadilla, we were able to continue to bond as a group. Many of us headed out to the Sky Trek to traverse amongst the treetops and sail through the sky on nothing more than a wire.

We all came together as a group tonight for dinner. I sat there, looking around the table and realizing that I have been extremely blessed with 14 new friendships. I can't wait to see what the rest of the trip will bring. Merry Christmas 2006!

Tuesday, Day 4

Empowerment – after another good breakfast we dispersed to our two sites. The construction crew drove to Cebadilla and chose their tasks, which consisted of:

- Digging dirt
- Stuccoing at the school
- Painting the school dining hall, inside and out
- Painting the salon and the church exterior

- Helping to prepare lunch
- Nailing new barbed wire to posts

Eduardo and I were sent to the crafts cooperative, where we were warmly greeted. The director, through an interpreter, told us the cooperative's history beginning in 1982 with nine women. Now 90 women and men participate, working from their homes. The artisans bring their products to the coop and each worker prices the products. Husbands have overcome their distrust in this *macho* society, allowing their wives to leave their homes, speak up and make their own money. Amazingly, the artisans have become confident and proud of their work. Twenty-five percent of each sale goes to the coop, 10 percent into a savings account for each participant. Self-esteem has soared. The process of creating products is often the result of a one-to-one mentoring process.

Previous Global Volunteers have contributed greatly to the landscape – bravo! Just as the community has been supporting the coop, let us too show our support when we visit it.

Wednesday, Day 5

Thought for the day:

1. Speak with integrity
 2. Don't make assumptions
 3. Don't take anything personally
 4. Always do your best
- from “The Four Agreements” by San Miguel Ruiz

Wednesday morning breakfast was ham and eggs with fresh fruit. Then we headed to the van to go to work. Some of us went to Cebadilla, the rest to the coop. The people who went to Cebadilla saw a nice bright rainbow. When we arrived there, we were assigned to our jobs. We worked until noon and then came in for lunch. There were noodles, white rice, beans, soft tortilla shells and fresh fruit. After that, we worked some more, with most of us getting our hands dirty and some of us getting all dirty! At 3 p.m., we were finally done. Then the vans picked us up and drove us to a party where there was candy, food and piñatas. Some of us left on the early van, the rest stayed for a later van. When we were driving back, we saw another rainbow, this one slightly dimmer than the first. After the van dropped us off at the hotel, we had a small break and then reconvened for dinner. At dinner we had zucchini soup, then a wonderful sea bass with garlic. Dinner was followed by a brief meeting touching on what we did and what we were going to do. Most of us were tired after the long day, so we went to bed.

Thursday, Day 6

Thought for the day:

“An Irish Blessing – May those who love us, love us. With those who don't love us, may God turn their hearts. If he can't turn their hearts, may he turn their ankles, so we will know them by their limp.”

Another great breakfast and we were off to work in Cebadilla and Monteverde. In the van, on the ride over to Cebadilla, we saw another rainbow, only this time it was somewhat faded. During the day, Helen learned how to make tortillas in the *cocina* (kitchen). Suze, Ann, and I were meter maids with Nicosio. Maggie and Jean cleaned the *escuela* (school) and Mandi hauled earth. John continued with the cement trough and Kate helped smooth out the cement. Later Kate decorated the wall at the back of the *cocina* with stucco. Alex hauled *la tierra* (earth) off the road and Bobbie did some stucco work on the wall by the *escuela*. We heard that Ed did some gardening while Val gave English lessons to some eager students.

The workday ended and most of us traveled to Monteverde and the crafts cooperative. We were dropped off at a cheese factory where we sampled cheese and indulged in ice cream. We then walked to the coop and saw where Val and Ed spent their days. Once inside, we browsed through the handmade crafts and purchased gifts for friends and family. We also went to the coffee shop and bakery where some bought coffee while others ate piggies in a blanket, cinnamon rolls and other pastries. Alex spent time making his own tamale.

We gathered for dinner and then retired to our rooms for a good night's sleep and preparation for another hard day at work tomorrow.

Friday, Day 8

Thought for the day:

“A young man once asked God how long a million years was to him,
God replied, ‘A million years to me is just like a single second in your time.’
Then the young man asked God what a million dollars was to him,
God replied, ‘A million dollars to me is just like a single penny to you.’
Then the young man got his courage up and asked God, ‘Could I have one of your pennies?’
God smiled and replied, ‘Certainly, just a second’.”
– Unknown

Journal Entry – Sung to the tune of “I’ve Been Working on the Railroad”

1. Wonderful breakfast.
2. Appropriate Spanish lesson – Goddess of the Kitchen.
3. Van to Cebadilla.
4. Scrape and paint roof of Cebadilla church.
5. Start work at the cemetery.
6. Dig and haul dirt/clay behind Cebadilla church.
7. Sand and finish tables and chairs at Cebadilla church.
8. Stucco school walls.
9. Level ground, dig trench, start foundation footing.
10. March to cemetery, work, march back to Cebadilla.
11. Back to hotel, clean up.
12. To Gina’s home – beautiful home, ecstatic view.

13. Share pizza.
14. Good conversation.
15. Old people left, youngsters stay.
16. Goodbye

Here's a recipe from a Cebadilla kitchen

Pasta in White Sauce

1. Cook 1 package of macaroni noodles.
2. Finely chop onion, garlic, cilantro, sweet pepper, sweet corn.
3. Sautee onion, garlic, pepper in butter.
4. Add 1 cup of sweet cream to sauté, add salt to taste.
5. Combine all ingredients in a pot.

Beans

1. To cook 1 package of beans.
 - a. Combine water and beans in a pot, 2 parts water to 1 part beans.
 - b. Bring pot to boil, and then turn down heat to simmer.
 - c. Simmer for about 45 minutes until a fork can go into the beans easily.
2. Finely chop onion, cilantro, and sweet pepper.
3. Saute onion, cilantro and sweet pepper in oil.
4. Add the cooked bean to the sautéd mixture and stir.
5. Add salt to taste.

Saturday, Day 9

The group met for breakfast at 7:30 a.m., then split up and regrouped for fish at lunch. John, Alex, Bobbie went into town for postcards, stamps, ice cream and doughnuts. Helen and Val went shopping with Rosita. Jean had a restful day. For some, the afternoon was spent at the Frog Emporium. A light supper – delicious warm bread, cheese, ham, avocados, tomatoes. After, we took the night walk through the jungle, not too far from the hotel. Not many animals, except humans, were out. But it was a nice walk.

Sunday, Day 10

Late breakfast. We were lazy until about 10 a.m., and then people split up. Helen, Sue, Val and Jean went to the Quaker meeting. John spent time with Alex and Bobbie working on homework – math and chemistry. A reward was an ice cream cone and a walk downtown. After a nice lunch, Helen and Val walked around town. Jean, Bobbie, and Alex went horseback riding. John stayed at the hotel dining hall to have coffee and read. A special New Year's Eve dinner with a glass of wine, pizza, watermelon, cookies, and coffee.

Monday, Day 11 – New Year's Day

Thought for the day:

“Watch your thoughts, they become words.

Watch you words, they become actions.

Watch your actions, they become habits.

Watch your habits, they become character.

Watch your character, it becomes your destiny.” – Unknown author

After a good breakfast, we had a morning walk in the Monteverde refuge – excellent guide, excellent path to walk on. The highlight for me was the Hummingbird Center – beautiful blues, purple, and greens. Back to the hotel for lunch. Some shopping in the afternoon. Good supper of lasagna with the rest of the group who shared their experiences from their weekend at La Fortuna.

Tuesday, Day 12

Thought for the day:

“A little less thought and a little more action.” – Unknown

Team accomplishments for the day

1. Dug ditch to repair broken water pipe.
2. Performed kitchen duties, including chopping, washing, cleaning, mopping, and sweeping
3. Added labels on product at the crafts cooperative.
4. Sanded, shellacked, and produced fine furniture, both at Cebadilla and the coop.
5. Dug dirt from the side of the road to use to level the ground at the schoolyard.
6. Moved earth from the back of the community center.
7. Built up two layers of concrete block to the bus stop.

Most memorable moment of the day from each team member

- Ann – Picking up the reservationists at Monteverde Reserve and being intrigued about why they do what they do.
- Val – Being able to apply my skills of working with children by playing Kooshball with the local youths.
- Mandi – Taking down Leandro, one of the kids at Cebadilla, with an Aikido move, because the kids at Cebadilla have been throwing mud at me for days!
- Helen – The relentless wind!
- Kelly - Seeing the water pipe and being able to finally understand why were digging the 20-foot long ditch.
- Devinder – Seeing Ann and Bobbie, the helping hand coming around the corner.
- Bobbie – Putting my shoulder down to catch a siesta.
- John – Mixing concrete... it reminded me of my childhood when I mixed my first bag of concrete with my grandfather.
- Alex – Throwing mud balls with the kids at Cebadilla.
- Jean – Finding the extra disk for sanding and staining furniture, for without it, I would be forced to postpone progress.
- Ed – Producing fine furniture.

- Kate – Recognizing that we were right around the bend from Rosita's (the inn), after being completely lost for 45 minutes on our morning walk.

Wednesday, Day 13

The day started really good with a 6 a.m. walk to the coffee shop. Then we returned to the hotel for a fantastic breakfast of French toast.

We went to the work site with lots of glimpses of rainbows. At the work site, everyone split off to different jobs. I worked with Grandpa and Kate trying to build the bus stop.

We had a fabulous lunch cooked by Val and the women of Cebadilla. We split into our jobs and some switched jobs with other people. Some of us moved earth, worked on bus stop and other jobs. We almost left Kelly behind when she wandered off to take pictures.

Some of us went horseback riding and saw a little more than a quarter of the sunset. Some rode fast and others rode slow. Some were looking behind and others trying to stay on the path. We shared dinner with other the other Global Volunteers group, making new friends. I would say today was a fantastic day.

- The End -