

Sierra Sales

“ I Believe” Statement

I think often times people forget how truly big this world is. There is so much more out there to be discovered and explored. Being half Spanish, as well as having relatives in other countries that I can visit, really allows me to get a feel for life outside the United States. The Spanish side of my family is from a country called Bolivia located in the central part of South America. I've been there a few times but I've always been too little to truly appreciate the culture. Two years ago, I went there for the first time in 7 years. This trip was unlike any other I have ever taken. The 20-hour flight basically takes you into an entirely different world. I had landed and was amazed at how different the city was from the city that I grew up in myself, being NYC. The country of Bolivia is very poor, and that is very easy to tell by the way the city looks. I was a little culture shocked. Traveling though the upper part of my city to where my family's house is was a journey in of itself. Lining the streets where children no older than the age 9 searching through and dumping over trash cans to find food. Clearly this is not something you see every day in the US. After spending a few days in the city, we moved to the countryside of Bolivia, where the weekend houses of my family are. Driving thought the gates of the town was breathtaking. The town was literally on the side of a mountain. The view was amazing. Once arriving we walked around the unpaved, desolate village until I found a group of kids playing a game of soccer. I was expecting to see grass or turf but instead I saw kids playing on concrete with an old ripped up ball, and no shoes. I was confused as to how that couldn't hurt or why they would play if they didn't have cleats, but you could tell by the smile on their face that they didn't care. They made do with what they had and they made it fun.

I believe each person needs to travel to a different country at least once. It's amazing how much one trip can change so much of the ideas or views you saw originally. But that's not something you can read about in a book or learn in a class, it requires you to jump right into the country and experience everything as if you live there. There is no other way in my opinion to be more accepting.