



# Shannon McCooey

Undergraduate Student, Elementary Education & Reading  
Cabarete, Dominican Republic - January 2015 & 2017

SET YOURSELF APART

## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

### CONNECTION

One of the most important parts of the program is the class meetings during the semester. We got to know each other and really become a support for one another before we even left Buffalo!

I felt inspired the first time I went to the DR, but I quickly learned the second time that the feeling only continues to build. You can't help but feel inspired to do amazing things because you see all of the amazing things that other people are doing.

I feel a very personal connection to this beautiful place and the people who live there. Sometimes I find myself bringing up my experiences just so I can share all the love that I have for the DR, and hopefully convince others to fall in love, too! There is just something about surrounding yourself with good people that makes you feel wonderful.



Shannon with her host family (left) visiting the monkey sanctuary (right) and with friends (below).  
[Click to Read Shannon's Blog](#)



### CONFIDENCE

IPDS provides hands-on experience with unfamiliar things that we cannot learn from sitting in class listening to a professor. My eyes have been opened to so many different teaching styles and ideas other than my own, sometimes outside of my comfort zone.

I've grown so much - more open-minded and independent. I feel more confident that I chose the right career path and am so glad I ignored the negative comments I got when sharing with others that I want to be a teacher. I'm not sure what steps I want to take next but I know that they will be great and that I have amazing people to support me and guide me along the way.

One of my most memorable moments was when I surpassed my terror of heights to go zip-lining. After letting everyone go ahead of me I could hear my dad's voice in my head saying, "Experience as much as you can, because this could be a once in a lifetime opportunity." My dad was my biggest inspiration for travel. I couldn't be more of a homebody but I am so grateful to him for encouraging me to travel, and proud of myself for taking the leap!

*I'm so blessed to have traveled with 3 IPDS programs. The experience is unlike anything else. As teachers we are supposed to be constantly learning, so why not learn something new AND experience it firsthand?! I could talk all day about why you should study abroad, but you won't have that fire inside until you take the risk and do it.*