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SET YOURSELF APART

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

TEACH

I was in a PDS at Bennett Park before we volunteered at 3 Mariposas Montessori. In learning about Montessori Method I noticed how many things I could bring into a traditional classroom to make students more successful. I saw the Method in two completely different cultures. Leading 3MM circle time was a lot of fun because it was our chance to teach a song to the students in English. Witnessing the children so happy to see us made me feel blessed to have such an opportunity.

STUDY

It was important to take the research aspect seriously, but I made sure to choose a topic that was interesting to me...a US to DR comparison of the certification process. We had a Spanish language immersion course in Cabarete, which made for some long days, but I wouldn't change the experience. Those classes helped me get around and to understand the 3MM students.

OBSERVE & GROW

I never had a lot; my family was always just 'getting by'. But this experience taught me the real meaning of poverty. One side of the main road is full of tourists and money, the other side a swamp and people who own nearly nothing. I am fortunate to have safety, a roof over my head, and food to keep me healthy and strong. I am more giving now than I was before this trip. It's just the right thing to do.



Sarah reading to children at 3MM (above left) ziplining at Monkey Jungle (left) and on the beach (above)

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"When I started teaching I automatically thought of my experience in the DR. I was reminded that we never know where our students come from, what their home life is like, what events they have experienced in their lives, what they may or may not have, or even what they ate that day. This trip taught me that, no matter a student's background, every child has an equal right to the best education."

Favorite Aspects of the Program

- Feeding monkeys! We actually went into their jungle and let them sit on our heads. It was the best day of my life.
- Lunch with families in 'the swamp'. It was eye-opening to realize we don't need material things to find happiness.
- Working with very young children at 3MM. I was amazed at the things I saw 2-year-olds accomplish.
- Location, Location, Location. We had instant access to the beach and could walk to the restaurants and shops.