



SET YOURSELF APART

GERMANY

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MAKING CONNECTIONS

The inspiration for participating in this program is very personal. My grandfather, who had passed away two years earlier, had been stationed in Germany. Just a week after my grandmother passed away unexpectedly, I received an email about IPDS-Germany. To me this was a sign...and the program became a way to grow closer to both my grandparents and to see the world my grandfather saw so many years ago.

It seemed that 'family' would become the theme for my experience as I was placed with an amazing host family who made me feel welcomed and comfortable. I had to learn to communicate in German AND in Spanish as the husband's first language was Spanish. We became so close over the short time I was there and I truly feel like I became one of their family forever.

GROWING AWARENESS

Before this experience I would not have gone on any trip to anywhere if I didn't know anyone traveling. But, because of my grandparents, I took the leap and learned that I am able to follow my dreams - by myself - and can make friends easily. I became a stronger person. I also became more aware as a teacher as to what it might be like for English Language Learners to be in American schools. Seeing classrooms and teaching styles in a country completely different from my own prepared me to enter my own classroom after graduation, and helped me better articulate for myself what kind of teacher I want to be.



Scenes from Berlin: The Berliner Dom, curry wurst from Curry36, and Laci touring the Reichstag
[Read Laci's Blog](#)



The 2-plus weeks I spent with my host - becoming part of her family - is my most cherished memory from the trip.

FAVORITE MOMENTS

- Drinking tea, late at night, with my host mother.
- Braiding my host's daughter's hair each morning.
- Going into the school and getting hugs from the kids.
- Learning the history that led to the current Germany.
- Climbing a TV tower to see the amazing view of Stuttgart.
- The impact of our visit to the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial...and mourning the loss of so many lives.