

Casper Interact Club International Service Project 2021

Thank you for supporting our 2021 service trip to Costa Rica! Your support helped three Casper high school students broaden their sense of community, expand their awareness of and appreciation for other cultures and participate in serving others on an international scale.

I wish I could report that everything went according to plan. As Mike Tyson once remarked, “Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth”. Like much of the last two-years of pandemic, the theme of our trip... “recalculating”

OUR PLAN

9 students

3 service projects

Fellowship with local Rotarians and Interact Clubs

After two years of planning, 3 students were able to travel – largely due to challenges with passports, vaccinations, and schedules. Jimmy, Riley, Katie, and I embarked on our grand adventure December 11th. From the start, adjustments were made. Weather closed the roads to Denver, so we ended up on an unanticipated one-way flight from Casper.



We arrived in Jaco in the early morning of December 12th. We found our way to the rental house, settled in, and explored Jaco.

A lot of “firsts” were experienced on this trip: first time traveling outside of the country, first time traveling without parents, first time experiencing the ocean...



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We received word two-days prior to departure that our first service project, Hermosa Sea Turtle Refuge, was cancelled. Due to concerns of the spread of COVID variants, the Costa Rican government shut down the nurseries and volunteer opportunities for non-locals. Adjusting, we spent the day exploring Jaco and visiting with locals.



To save on costs, we shopped at a local market and prepared most of our meals at home.



Experiencing rainforests and ziplining for the first time.

Golf tournaments and breaking early for the holidays prevented us from connecting with the local Rotarians and Interact clubs. Adjusting, we spent the day exploring historical sites in Jaco.



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Heavy rains closed the roads to our second scheduled service project with Costas Verdes. The kids worked together to come up with a plan to work with and serve residents of Jaco...



One of our cultural immersion experiences included an afternoon of learning in Manuel Antonio National Park.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

While most of our plans required shifting, adjusting, and rolling with a few punches, we gained new perspectives, tried new things, and stepped out of what was comfortable. We learned patience, tolerance, and appreciation of others. We experienced a new culture, tried new foods, and witnessed a level of poverty and homelessness before unfamiliar. We talked about the things we take for granted and the precious resources and opportunities we sometimes fail to appreciate. We learned flexibility, adaptability, keeping a positive attitude when life throws a curveball, and the importance of a kind word or thoughtful gesture when we're struggling.

I am exceptionally proud of these kiddos and grateful I had the opportunity to travel with them, learn from them.

Thank you for your support of our youth and for providing local students with the opportunity to broaden their sense of community, grow as individuals, and serve others.

Elissa Ruckle
Advisor to Casper Interact Club