

PURA VIDA, COSTA RICA

The official Newsletter from Costa Rica



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Editors Message

First of all I have to say that I am so happy to start one more year with all you friends. This 2013 we want to encourage more people to be part of this experience abroad, in which you as a volunteer can live a unique time with the project that you are going to join. Thanks so much to all of you guys for been part of us during last year and this coming one too!

Laura Estrada

Social Manger

PROJECTS UPDATES!

ENGLISH CLASSES AS PART OF THE HOLIDAY SPECIAL PROJECT AT THE 'ASCENSION SCHOOL'

This beginning of the 2013 has been very important in Liberia city, because Projects Abroad volunteers are making a really nice job giving English classes for children and adults citizens from Liberia. The Project started on January 3rd and will be finished until middle of February when schools open again.

Basically volunteers and staff members like Andres Solano and Gabriela Ruiz that are helping with this project, they are teaching many topics of the English grammar to the different classes that we have at the school. One group is in charge of little children from 7 to 9, another one is from the 10 to 13 years and adults one is conformed for people from 15 years. The adults group is divided in two different classes; this is with the purpose to give a best service to them so one group is for beginners and one for advanced.



Sports Activity during the holiday special project at La Victoria Soccer Field.

The sports activity started at La Victoria soccer field located in Liberia on January 7th. Volunteers at these projects are encouraged to participate with the children that are part of the soccer group in that place. Andres Solano the sports supervisor is going with them in order to show them what to do while they are working with the children, some activities that they do are: Volleyball, soccer and more. This is from 8:30 am to 11:30 am since Monday to Friday and will finish until school year.



*Painting projects at the placement “Las Ovejitas” in Liberia,
Guanacaste.*

The paint project was done at one of our placements in Liberia. Some of the girl volunteers made possible cute murals like a rainbow and a landscape also beautify some walls inside and outside the place.

I would like to thank the girls for this and give them congratulations for this excellent project at “Las Ovejitas”, I am pretty sure children will be very happy with this.



Care Volunteer Experience.

Lotta Elvander, Care Volunteer Heredia, Costa Rica.

Hi, my name is Lotta Elvander and I am from Sweden, I have done the Care Project for two months in the area of Heredia.

I came on the 1st of November to my host family, which was a Thursday so I had the weekend to just hang out with them. As everybody knows it's a bit nervous and a little scary to move in with a family you never met before or even speak the same language, But my Tico-family made me feel at home, they treated me as a family member and I felt welcome after a few minutes.

And to tell all of you that's just how you will feel everywhere you go in Costa Rica: welcome! To tell you about my project, I have one word for it: wonderful! The kids and the people I worked with have been extremely amazing to me. They are now my friends and my "Tico-family".

And the whole time I have been there has been an extremely good lesson for me, to see how the culture is, how they worked at day-cares here. I worked at a day-care and it is very different from back home and I must say that I am extremely happy I came here; it has been just wonderful to get to see the culture here and to be with Projects Abroad!

Everybody should do a little volunteer work in their lives, the feeling of it and the people you meet are just so amazing! The good thing has also been that I have been free every weekend for travels.

Usually I went with other volunteers to different beaches or national parks, for me the system with Projects Abroad is good because you get the culture of the land, you get to see the land and you get to live as the locals do! Perfect for an experience abroad!

Thanks for my two months with Projects Abroad!.

Article from Barra Honda, Costa Rica

Costa Rica Dry Tropical Forest Conservation and Environment Project

The rain season finished and the strong winds came from the north heralded the future of summer. This means, less water in the rivers, trees without leaves, but full of flowers, fewer amphibians are active as they wait for the first rains in May of 2013.



Before Christmas in all the houses in Costa Rica we have the tradition of making Tamales, this is a dish made of dough (usually corn-based) wrapped in banana leaves and cooked in a wood stove.

Cultural day and social activity

The cultural activity we did this month was to make Tamales before Christmas, we went through the whole process of grinding corn, cutting and cooking vegetables, cleaning the banana leaves, tying the tamales and cooking them.



For years here in Barra Honda we have continued with the tradition of making a Christmas dinner where all the volunteers, staff members and rangers are together to celebrate.

For the social activity we decided to make a lunch on Carrillo beach, because of this we had a lot of time together in a different atmosphere.

Amphibian project

This year we didn't find many amphibians in the project most likely because the 2012 rain season was really dry and this affects the abundance of these animals in the forest.

In December we did the last amphibian monitoring of the year. Now we will wait for the dry season to finish and start again with the first rains in May of 2013. New weather tools can help us to research the amphibian's microhabitats and the abundance of them between different places in Barra Honda National Park next year.



[Butterfly project](#)

We started to test some new butterfly projects because we will follow a new methodology that includes work in the new transects that we created throughout the National Park. We are also making new traps and butterfly field guides that will improve the project. The data we collect will help us finish with the inventory that we started two and half years ago.

[Seed and Nursery Garden project](#)

In the dry forest we have some species of trees that are in danger of suffering population decrease. We chose six of the most important trees to use for the seed project. We are following a methodology to identify the best individual trees of each of the six species so that the seedlings will have the same good characteristics as their progenitors. The methodology requires us to go into the forest, search for the individuals, mark them with a GPS and topography tape, measure the height and diameter as well as see how healthy the tree is. A healthy tree is free of termites, holes, and other damage.

This project is connected directly with the nursery garden project, which we started to work on this month. The new nursery garden will be where we germinate the seeds and keep the seedlings. When the seedlings are ready we will distribute them to different institutions like schools, parks, private properties and other reforestation projects

The six species of trees we have been working with are of high value because of the quality of their wood. In the upcoming year we plan on expanding the project to include trees that have medicinal properties and ornamental qualities.

[Monkey project](#)

This month we started to test some projects with howler monkeys, trying to find the best way to study them. We hope that by the end of January the project will be ready.

We start by analyzing the different troops. We observe the number of monkeys per troop, as well as the number of females, males and juveniles in the troop. We are also studying the behavior of the monkeys, for instance what they eat, where they go, when they reproduce, and other behaviors.