

Project Description

Soccer Without Borders – Granada, Nicaragua

I will be spending a full year volunteering as a Team Leader for Soccer Without Borders in Granada, Nicaragua. Soccer Without Borders uses soccer as a vehicle for positive change, providing under-served youth a toolkit to overcome obstacles to growth, inclusion, and personal success. Though the organization also works in Uganda and the United States, the program in Nicaragua is unique in that it is specifically for girls. Girls in Nicaragua face significant obstacles; more than half do not complete primary school and over 25% are pregnant before age 18. Soccer Without Borders works to address these problems in Granada through soccer, creating a team environment in which girls can feel safe, secure, and supported in a variety of ways. This past year, the organization created the Granada Education Program, offering participants school supplies, uniforms, secondary school scholarships, and tutoring.

As a Team Leader with Soccer Without Borders, I will work primarily with one age group of girls in Granada. I will be responsible for planning, designing, and implementing the majority of the programming for my team, such as soccer practices, team-building activities, workshops, and special events. Additionally, I will work to recruit new program participants, forge relationships with the girls' parents, and take on several administrative roles, such as bookkeeping and marketing. Though I will primarily be a representative of Soccer Without Borders, I will also be representing the United States, and part of the Team Leaders' responsibilities are to promote and engage in cross-cultural learning and understanding amongst program participants and the greater community of Granada.

Throughout college, I studied the Spanish language and Latin American culture, graduating with a Spanish major in addition to my degree in International Economics & Cultural Affairs. I was also a member of the men's soccer team at Valparaiso University, and worked this past summer with an organization called Soccer Shots, coaching and teaching young children. I want to be a Team Leader for Soccer Without Borders because I believe in the incredible power soccer has to be a positive influence in youths' lives. Throughout my life, soccer has had an enormous impact; it gave me a strong group of friends, taught me how to deal with adversity, promoted a healthy lifestyle, motivated me to do well in school, introduced me to people from all over the world, and provided me with countless other benefits. The game has given so much to me, and I look forward to sharing that experience with girls in Nicaragua as a Team Leader for Soccer Without Borders.