

August 31, 2016
Final Report

I'm continued to be in awe by how fast time has gone since I first arrived here in Costa Rica. I was hesitant and nervous when I arrived almost a year ago, but now I'm feeling hesitant and nervous as my exit date approaches. Since July, Casa Brasilito and Abriendo Mentes have experienced many changes. We have seen leadership changes, we've seen colleagues leave and move on to other projects, as well as have had to come together as a team to compensate for positions that we have not yet filled. Through it all, I am very proud of my team and it still remains the highest privilege to work with this community.

Throughout the month of July, I became a consistent classroom aide assistant to the Lead Youth English Teacher. We haven't found anyone to officially fill this position, but it has been a pleasure to be able to step in and support the lead teacher and the children in this way. During this time, we also had 2 volunteers, 1 from the United States, and another one from Italy that participated in classroom activities.

As for my personal work, my friend and colleague and site psychologist has left. This was very difficult because she was such an integral part of the community development as well as support for community members. Additionally, along with the changes I previously mentioned, the women's group that I have closely been working with is moving to another non-profit organization called CEPIA. This is also a tough change and transition because I have been able to see so much growth within these women. My hope is that their hard work will continue, that they will set and achieve their goals, and that they will continue to be pushed to their highest potential. With this being said, we had the opportunity to celebrate all the hard work that the women and our psychologist have accomplished by sharing a day together at Tamarindo Beach. While there, we encountered a crocodile that was scarily close to the beach. However, do not worry, no one was harmed in the observing of the wild reptile! It turned out to be a lovely day, and we all had the opportunity to share what this journey together has meant to us. I have continued to work with the women facilitating health workshops. For the last few weeks we have focused on mental health, and it has proved to be one of the best sessions we've had as a group.

As my time here is coming to a drastically quick close, I can't express how incredible this opportunity has been. I have learned more than I could have ever imagined personally and professionally. I am so grateful to this community for welcoming me with open arms and resilient hearts and minds. My biggest wish is that the community of Brasilito will continue to thrive and the beauty of this environment will continue to shine daily.