

# KASSIA BALUS

Undergraduate, Exceptional Education  
IPDS Dominican Republic | January 2017 & 2019



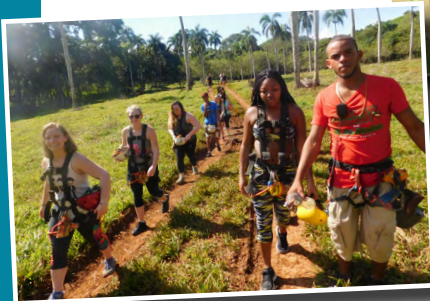
## GAINING PERSPECTIVE

I first visited the Dominican Republic in 2017 and have never felt such a pull to be anywhere in my entire my life. At one point I broke down in tears over feeling the urgency to help, to make a difference in the lives of the girls at the the Mariposa DR Foundation (pictured above), and to make significant changes to how I live and impact the world. I felt guilty for the life of absolute comfort that I was living.

Those tears motivated me to make the most of my short time in the DR, to continue my research on education, and to commit to returning. The Foundation was life-changing and widened my perspective of the world. There isn't a day that I don't work to live so the people I met are not hurt by my choices. This means recycling, consciously reducing how much I consume, and choosing reusable instead of one-time use items.

Being thrown into a new culture and studying Spanish with local children was the greatest of experiences. I learned how to communicate despite language barriers. It taught me what it is like to be a language-learner and an immense lesson on the importance of accommodating my future students who are new to the English language.

Most importantly, I learned the need to recognize our universal language -- that of our shared humanity. No matter where you are or who you meet, there are ties that bind us. Just open your eyes, release your anxiety - be humble, receptive, and kind - and you will see the connections.



Check Out Kassia's IPDS Blogs:

<https://buffalostateipdsdominicanrepublic.weebly.com/kassia1>

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