



SET YOURSELF APART

CHILE

Chelsea Davidson

*Undergraduate Student, Exceptional Education
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CONNECT

When I learned I would be paired with another Buffalo State student, I never imagined I would soon call her one of my best friends. I was nervous about living with a family I didn't know, with a student I didn't know, in a country I didn't know. But Emma and I navigated Chile and faced the language barrier together - all with immense amounts of laughter, smiles, and new memories. The bond I formed with all of the participants (and leader!) is so different than any other relationship. You share unique encounters and rely on one another to remain positive and to bring out the best when things seem scary at first.

TEACH & LEARN

No matter who you educate, it is important to remember where your students come from and that they may not all have the same support and resources. This awareness re-shaped my teaching philosophy. I stopped focusing primarily on the academic part of learning and took on a new appreciation for students acquiring social, emotional, and functional skills. I learned the importance of conversation and social interactions. In addition, I was able to complete and present research that compared teacher readiness for educating students with disabilities. **Self-reflecting during my time in Chile really gave me a deeper connection as to WHY I chose this career path, and HOW I will mold myself into the best teacher I can be.**

GROW

Studying abroad is so much more than signing up and paying for a plane ticket. We got an inside look at the daily routine and typical education of Chilean students. At the same time we visited one of the most beautiful countries in the world - on foot, by car and on horseback! Every single day was packed with things to do and places to be. I am proud to say I was part of IPDS-Chile and proud that I represented Buffalo State and the Exceptional Education Department in my travels.



Chelsea riding horseback in the Andes (left) and with elementary school student (right).



[Click to read Chelsea's blog!](#)

My experience was unique because I allowed it to be!

"Buffalo State not only gave me the opportunity to embark on a wonderful adventure, they prepared me for travel in ways for which I am forever thankful. Our weekly class helped me to feel completely ready to go abroad, and gave me the confidence I needed to make the most of the experience."