



Brittany Miller

Undergraduate Student, Elementary Education & Reading
Cabarete, Dominican Republic - January 2017

SET YOURSELF APART

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

PERCEPTIONS

My mind was permanently altered by my IPDS experience. I have a broader perspective on why education is so important. By the end of each school visit I felt selfish for every absence, every complaint, every excuse I made as a student. ***I learned*** that there is so much more to this world than our everyday routines. ***I learned*** that owning almost nothing does not mean that you cannot be genuinely happy. ***I learned*** that living a materialistic life does not mean that you are genuinely satisfied. ***I learned*** that my generation (in particular) needs to understand that approval from others is not the key to happiness and that social media does not create true connections.

I felt confident as a teacher candidate, but knew I needed to discover more of myself to unveil what kind of educator I was going to be, what my passions would entail when I stepped into a classroom full of children.

ENCOURAGEMENT

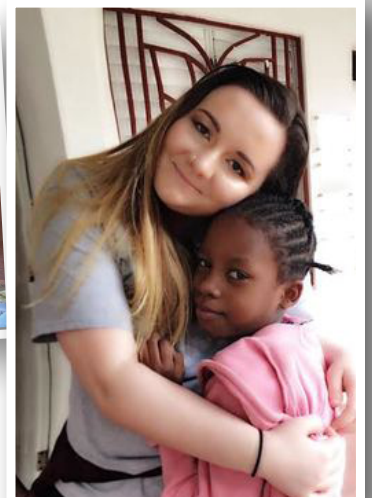
Keeping an open mind is key to gaining the most from international programs. Not everything is going to happen as planned. It's important to be fluid so you can enjoy your experience. Never hold inflexible expectations. The culture, people, foods, environments, etc that you become submerged in can be very different and unique from what you know - and they should be embraced, not judged. Turn off your smart phone and see the world in its entirety!

THE GIRL EFFECT

What makes this IPDS unique is the connection with the Mariposa DR Foundation - working to empower girls to create sustainable solutions for ending generational poverty. Our relationship with MDRF was the most satisfying, humbling and inspirational experience. Learning about the work of the Mariposas, and organizations like it around the world, was immensely emotional and made me realize that the long-term goals I had set for myself were not up to par with what I am capable of accomplishing. I realized that I want to be part of something greater, to bring something much deeper to my students. Because of the Foundation ***I am empowered, I am motivated, I am encouraged, I am inspired!***



Buffalo State teacher candidates and Mariposa girls (above). Brittany with her Mariposita partner, Katiana.
[Click to Read Brittany's Blog](#)



***Knowledge makes us humble.
Arrogance makes us ignorant.***

***Open your eyes, feed your soul with
what really matters, and love
wholeheartedly for the right reasons.***