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LOVE...

I made good friends, but at the beginning I was really nervous about how my cohort and I would blend. This IPDS journey truly opened my heart and my mind. I learned how to trust. I learned that I can love and respect someone who is different than me without judgment. And I learned that I can express my love and acceptance and vulnerability. I became especially close to my roommate, Keiayrah, and thank her for dealing with my shenanigans, but mostly for ensuring that I never felt alone. The amount of compassion and love I have for everyone I met is different...It sounds cheesy but we seriously are a family. Each of us brought something unique to the table; but what I loved most is that not a single person was mean or stingy or rude. We took care of each other and didn't look for anything in return. Love is accepting each other's difference and learning each other's "love language," learning how to care for them, how to meet their needs and how to communicate.

+/= FOOD!

I became the house chef, cooking each night for my mates and eventually making Alfredo for the entire group! For our morning breaks from the classrooms we'd walk into the neighborhood for *empanadas*. I so looked forward to these walks and joking with the street vendor. Families welcomed us into their homes and to their tables. This is HUGE! I firmly believe that food brings people together. Food is Love.



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Lessons from Teaching Abroad

1. You don't know everything, and that's OK.
2. Think on your feet!
3. Repeat. Rephrase. Redo.

In the beginning I underestimated the knowledge of my students. I assumed they didn't know any English and that was a big mistake!

Check Out B'ili's IPDS Blog:
<https://buffalostateipdsdominicanrepublic.weebly.com/bili>