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BOUNDARY-LESS

Participating in this program challenged me in ways I never expected, and allowed me to step out of my comfort zone in the best way possible. The trip became so much more than just a journey to a new place -- it became a journey of self-discovery and personal growth. I found myself saying “yes” to opportunities I never would have imagined. From kayaking to pushing through fatigue on a mountain hike to having a monkey climb on my head. I embraced new things, changed in ways I never expected, and was reminded that I am stronger than my doubts. Looking back, I realize that leaving my comfort zone wasn’t just about trying new things, it was about deepening my confidence and proving to myself that I am brave, adaptable, and ready for whatever comes next.



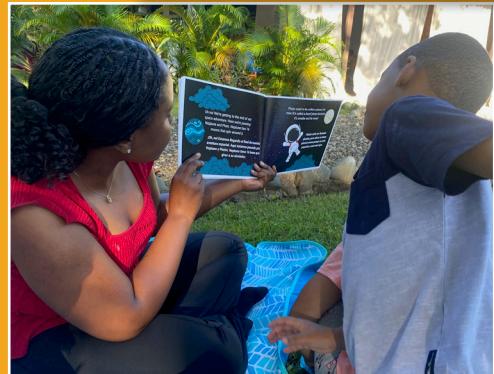
CLARITY OF PURPOSE

Our visit to Los Niños de la Luz left a lasting impact on me. Implicit bias led me to assume the orphanage would have heartbreaking conditions and be overcrowded and under-resourced. Instead, I was met with a scene that defied my expectations. There was ample space for children to explore and multiple houses provided a sense of warmth and community. We were welcomed by a kindhearted couple who shared the history of the orphanage and their journey of involvement. As I listened, I felt an overwhelming sense of clarity about my own path. Being in an environment with individuals who share my passion for nurturing and uplifting children reignited my sense of purpose. As an aspiring educator, I am constantly reminded that we never truly know what our students are experiencing. This visit reinforced my commitment to creating a classroom where every child feels loved, supported, and valued and reminded me of the impact compassion and education can have on a child’s life.



FRIENDSHIPS

In our free time, our cohort would walk along the beach to get ice cream. These moments became my favorite part of the trip, not just because of the sweet treats, but because they allowed us to truly connect. We were all strangers, coming from different backgrounds, but as we walked the shore we opened up, shared stories, and simply enjoyed each other’s company. These casual yet meaningful moments built a bond and friendships I never expected.



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