

# ANNA PUCHALSKI

Undergraduate, Childhood Education & TESOL  
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## FAMILY

Spending time with my host family was definitely one of my favorite parts of this trip. I loved making tortillas with them and teaching English to my host mom's 6-year-old granddaughter, who was so eager to learn. My host family was so kind and welcoming. I'm still in contact with my "mama tica"!

## NATURE

A major highlight was hiking to Nauyaca Waterfalls. It was an exhaustingly long and hot walk, but the end goal was totally worth the effort. The waterfalls and sights were breathtakingly beautiful and we cooled off with a swim in the natural pools. Another day was spent on the water in a boat that took us through the mangroves. We saw Costa Rican wildlife and ecosystems up close including snakes, monkeys, baby alligators, and even a sloth! It was a memorable and exhilarating day.

## LANGUAGE

As someone studying to become an ESL teacher, I believed this would be a beneficial experience; the trip solidified my desire to teach ESL. It was amazing to be immersed in the Spanish language, which not only improved my Spanish skills, but helped me to realize how difficult and exhausting it can be to learn a language. Ultimately, it allowed me to come to a MUCH greater understanding of how ENL students feel and made me more cognizant of the importance of finding ways to help students feel relaxed. I want to create space for my students' home language and traditions, which are so integral to their lives and cultures. These should not be forfeited when they come to the U.S. and sharing can help them to not feel so left out or alone in the classroom.

