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Class of 2018
Managua, Nicaragua

During the summer between my junior and senior years at Siena, I spent six weeks in Managua, Nicaragua with my classmate Brian Talbot. Managua is the capital of Nicaragua and it is filled with many hardworking, friendly, caring Nicas (their word for Nicaraguans). Although Nicaragua is currently considered the second poorest country in the Americas, the people I met during my visit lived happily and proudly with what they had. During my trip the people I met and the stories they shared reminded me of how easy it is to take luxury items for granted and just how privileged we are living the United States.

During my time in Managua, we worked with two different organizations. In the mornings we worked with Olla de la Soya, a Nicaraguan run organization that provides schooling and meals to children living in underprivileged and malnourished areas. We worked at a preschool and helped the two volunteer teachers in their classes, and we also helped in the kitchen preparing food for the kids. I helped teach a class of 15 to 20 three and four year olds, while Brian helped teach a class of 15 to 20 five and six year olds.



Sometimes, we would think of activities we could do with the kids to keep them occupied and help get them through another day of classes. One day we taught all of the kids and the volunteers how to make ice cream using cream, ice, and plastic bags.



In the afternoons, we volunteered with an organization called Cantera, which is a U.S. based organization that creates Nicaraguan run centers in the more underprivileged and lower income neighborhoods. Many of these centers cater to the youth in the area. The center we worked at was in a neighborhood called Dimitrov, and its goal was to provide a safe place for children ages 10-16 where they could be free of the gang violence in their neighborhood and receive support from both volunteers and their peers. Cantera in Dimitrov provided the youth with many different classes, including dance, theater, English, drawing, and homework help. All of the classes are run by young adults who attended classes at the center in the past.



One week while we were there, a group from a catholic high school in the U.S. spent a few days at the center interacting with the kids, playing games, and helping plant a garden.



Throughout my time in Nicaragua, I was able to travel to a few cities outside of Managua, experience the Nica culture, and meet some wonderful people who welcomed me into their home and their lives. I am very grateful for the opportunity I was given to serve in Managua and the people and the city will forever hold a special place in my heart.



The view outside of my bedroom over Barrio La Luz.

A typical Nicaraguan meal – tajadas (fried plantains), gallo pinto (rice and beans), and pollo asado (grilled chicken).





The Pacific Ocean and the beach in the nearby town of Pochomil.



The view from the top of the Masaya Volcano in Managua.