



## LOS CHILES, ALAJUELA

Located 6 kilometers from the Nicaraguan border, this town of 16,000 people has a cultural identity rooted in the traditions of Nicaraguan migrants who settled the Guatuso indigenous land to raise cattle and harvest rubber. This influence can be seen in local cuisine, traditional dances, religious celebrations and more.

Despite the drive for crop and livestock cultivation, a large wetlands area has been protected nearby, known as Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge. It is home to a prehistoric fish species called Gaspar, along with hundreds of species of migratory birds. This town is still an important point of passage for Nicaraguan migratory workers and their families, some of whom stay in the region working for pineapple farms, while others carry on to the central valley to work in coffee plantations.

### YOUTH IN LOS CHILES

Youth represent a large portion of the population in the town, with 42% of residents being age 19 or under. There are options for primary and secondary education as well as several different sport groups, soccer being the most popular.

Some challenges they face include school attrition, substance and alcohol use, poverty, and negligence in the home. Adults and youth also report wanting more recreational access, leadership opportunity and higher education institutions nearby.



# COSTA RICA: 2 AÑOS EN TIQUICIA

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## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST

Peace Corps' approach to positive youth development is "to provide boys, girls, and youth with the education, skills, and resources necessary to assume their positive roles in their own healthy development; with the constant support of their mothers, fathers, and service providers."

Collaborated with local service providers in elementary and high schools, community members and parents to increase youth access to leadership, sports and sexual health information.



## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Escuela Mérida García Flores
- Colegio Técnico Profesional Los Chiles
- Patronato Nacional de la Infancia
- Ministerio de Salud
- Municipalidad de Los Chiles
- Comité de Deportes Cantonal
- Ministerio de Educación Pública
- Community Members of Los Chiles

## PROJECTS & COMMITTEES

### CYBER-SAFETY COMPUTER CLASSES

Provided online risks awareness curriculum and basic computer skills to 1st through 7th grade students.

### CHICAS PODEROSAS CLUB

Weekly empowerment workshops with 7<sup>th</sup> grade girls to address self-esteem, healthy relationships, gender equality, and goal setting.

### PARENTING WORKSHOPS

Education for parents about communication styles and child developmental stages to effectively reduce instances of disruptive classroom behaviors.

### MONITORING, REPORTING & EVALUATION COMMITTEE

- Collaborate closely with program staff and local grants manager to better support volunteers in their efforts to track the outcomes of their community projects.
- Responsible for developing volunteer trainings, reviewing biannual volunteer reports, and create additional materials.
- Support the Peace Corps Costa Rica efforts to maintain consistent and accurate nationwide reporting.
- Selected to represent Youth Development volunteer perspectives in a meeting with several Costa Rican Ministry of Public Education stakeholders to update countrywide project goals and objectives.

## LESSONS LEARNED

"It may be that when we no longer know what to do, we have come to our real work and when we no longer know which way to go, we have begun our real journey.

The mind that is not baffled is not employed. The impeded stream is the one that sings."

- Wendell Berry

## WORDS OF WISDOM

Get involved with local Peace Corps events, talk to a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, reach out to a current volunteer serving in a region that interests you. Maybe even try some language class to boost your confidence going in. Peace Corps service is so challenging but it truly can be so rewarding. Most of us say it's -

*"The toughest job you'll ever love."*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the community of Los Chiles and Peace Corps Costa Rica for providing me with the richest experience of my life.

A special thank you to the Office of Global Studies for providing me with the chance to reflect on this experience as it pertains to my future career and current studies. I am also extremely grateful for all of the encouraging notes from the office and occasional chocolate deliveries on mail days.

This whole experience would not have been possible without the immense support from my family and friends both in the United States and Costa Rica.

¡PURA VIDA!