



## › Volunteer Cara Barbato helps make a difference teaching the importance of nutrition in the Urubamba valley in Cusco, Peru

Her passion for helping others and a desire to experience a different culture brought Cara Barbato, 21-years-old, from the University of Delaware to the beautiful Andes in Urubamba, Peru. Pursuing a Bachelors of Science in Dietetics converted Cara into a very valuable volunteer for the Nutrition Project which she participated in for one month through Projects Abroad. Through this project, she had the chance to make a difference to the lives of mothers and children in the area.

During her first two weeks, Cara was involved in several different activities. She participated in a three day workshop through the government program Vaso de leche (glass of milk), during which she taught mothers about the nutrition pyramid and played games related to it.

Additionally she was involved in dental fluoride campaigns in different towns around the Urubamba valley, giving children above the age of four fluoride treatments on their teeth and teaching them about good dental care and what foods contribute to healthy teeth. For a few days Cara joined volunteers at the Care Project in their Summer school where she taught basic nutrition information, such as differentiating fruits from vegetables and why each food group is important.

For the remaining time she was based in the Centro de Vigilancia de Ccotowincho with another volunteer, Livia Berg from the USA. This center is always in need of volunteers as it provides breakfast and lunch for pregnant women, mothers and young children. Here Cara and Livia ran



nutrition education workshops a couple of times a week and played nutrition related games with the mothers, helping to create bonds and trust with them, something the workers at the center don't normally do. "Projects Abroad

supplied all of the games and learning materials; without their involvement the center would merely become a “cafeteria” for breakfast and lunch,” Cara explains.

Doing house visits in the small town of Ccotowincho was an eye opener for Cara. This town does not have paved roads and many of the houses are small with dirt floors. She went house to house with a nurse technician, reaching out to different families and teaching them different aspects about health and hygiene. Some of these houses consist of one room where a family of ten lives together, children playing on those dirt floors with flea-ridden dogs and a foul smell all around. “I could not believe my eyes. It is not fair that people live like that in the world. I will keep this memory with me at all times; it encouraged me to work hard while I was volunteering, and it is a constant reminder to not take anything I have for granted and to always help others,” says Cara.

“My experience in Peru changed my life in the best way possible. It opened my mind and heart to a completely different culture and language than I am accustomed to in the United States. My host family treated me as a part of their own. The Sacred Valley is absolutely beautiful and I had never seen landscapes like it before in my life.”

Cara advises future volunteers to learn all of the Spanish they can before coming and to spend time travelling around the Sacred Valley because of the many different things to experience: markets, different plazas, ruins and trails. “Time flies very quickly and do not take your time in Peru for granted!”



We hope great stories like these inspire other companies to contribute their expertise and join Projects Abroad in making a difference and by doing so, have a great learning and team building experience along the way.