¡Guatemala!

Dear Parents,

August 2015

This year I am planning a trip to Antigua, Guatemala for students who have taken 3 years of language, with at least one year in Spanish, or who are currently enrolled in Spanish 3 or 4. The purpose of this trip is to improve Spanish language skills and learn about Guatemalan culture.

This trip includes a home stay with a Guatemalan family and no less than 2 Sitka kids per household. All meals are included with the family stay. This trip also includes 4 hours of language classes per day during the weekdays. On the weekends we will take 2 trips, one to Lake Atitlan and one to the ruins of Tikal.

The length of the trip will be two weeks. This year we are looking at June 7th to June 22nd. The cost is estimated to be around $2300 including all meals, travel within country, airfare and accommodations. It does NOT include airfare from Sitka to Seattle and back. The non-refundable deposit of $200 is due by September 25th and you can pay it to Teri Loree in the front office at SHS.

If you are interested please send me an email or call me to let me know. I would like to start planning this so parents are able to purchase PFD tickets to Seattle in October.

Please remember that any drug, alcohol or violence related suspensions prior to this trip will result in ineligibility for the trip.

Also, below is the website for the school and some general information:


Academia de Español PROBIGUA (Proyecto Bibliotecas Guatemala) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to two goals:

1) Providing the beginning, intermediate, and advanced student of Spanish with an intensive, total-immersion experience, featuring:

- One-on-one instruction with a university trained teacher for 4 to 7 hours per day or group classes with three to four students.
- Trips to enable the use of language skills in settings most relevant to the student.
- Daily group activities with fellow students and teachers to practice skills in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere.

2) Helping the children of Guatemala by donating the school's profits to establish and maintain libraries in the many rural villages in which there is no access to books.

Ariel Starbuck
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¡Guatemala!

I am Ariel Starbuck, Sitka High’s Spanish teacher and here are some details about the trip. Please contact me with any questions.

This is my 11th year traveling with students. I have taken them to Spain once, Costa Rica three times and this will be my seventh trip to Guatemala with students. I prefer this trip to the others because the cost is reasonable, I have a lot of contacts in Guatemala and I feel it is the most cultural and educational. I plan this trip myself instead of going through a company which is why it is significantly cheaper.

We fly from Seattle to Texas to Guatemala City. There we are picked up by a “library” bus (called a bibliobus) and taken to Antigua, Guatemala. Antigua is a very historic city, full of cobblestone streets and old world architecture. The students live with at least 1 other Sitka kid, sometimes 2 or 3, in a local house with a local family. Usually the main job of the family is hosting foreign students. They eat 3 meals a day with the family and in general the families do not speak much English which is great, authentic practice for the kids. The students go to class at the school we are affiliated with from 8 AM to 12 PM every weekday. They are one on one with a Spanish teacher so they can work at their level and study whatever they feel they need practice with. After school we meet daily and do different activities, riding on the school’s library bus. We do things like visit a coffee plantation; go to a local village and learn about their weavings; take a cooking class; visit a village school where we meet the children, tour their school, play soccer or basketball and eat lunch with them; hike a volcano, etc. It is very busy and exciting. The kids are always exhausted from switching back and forth between languages. On the weekends we take 2 trips. First, we visit Panajachel, a small town on a crater made lake and then on Sunday we go to Chichicastenango, the largest market in Latin America. Second, we travel by bus to northern Guatemala where we visit the ruins of Tikal, and by far this is always the group favorite. The Mayan ruins are amazing. And then we fly home.

I have some scholarship money and can offer $1150 for the trip. The student would need to pay the other $1150. This trip includes airfare from Seattle to Guatemala and back, all meals, lodging, weekend travel, hotels, entrances into anything we do, etc. All the student would need is spending money. They would also need to buy her own ticket to Seattle and back from Sitka. I think on average $200-$300 spending money is fine for the 2 weeks. The students will all need a passport. The immunizations the students are required to have to attend public school are all they need for this trip.

In the past I have traveled with Hector Hurtado, Mike Vieira, Toby Campbell, Cheryl Vastola, Sarah Hesse-Bruhl, Traci Gale, Darryl Rehkopf, Katie Wood, Marievic Ramil, Lucas Starbuck, Kris Fulton, Jack Wood, and Cathy Hazel. Please feel free to contact any of them about the trip.

I hope this gives you some information about the trip. I think this trip teaches kids compassion, appreciation for what they have, a new global perspective, and it definitely betters their Spanish.

Again, contact me any time if you have questions.

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