

April 8, 2008

Dear Class of '55,

I want to thank you for your generous donations which have enabled me to capitalize on an amazing opportunity to study abroad in Bolivia. Throughout college, I have worked incredibly hard to balance my finances by working an average of 15 hours a week during the school year, and 40+ hours a week during the summer, at a variety of jobs, always seeming to come up short. Without this award, the costs of studying abroad would have been too great for my family and me to manage, and this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity could have remained outside my reach.

By traveling to Bolivia I had the chance to make the most of my Spanish skills by being immersed in the language. By speaking it every day and depending on it to get around the city, my accent improved, my confidence increased and I was able to transfer what I have learned in the classroom into real-life situations; these were aspects of learning that I simply could not have learned by merely sitting in a classroom. I lived with a native host-family and was introduced to Bolivian traditions, foods, and slang. It was a very unique and effective window into a life that is so different, but at times so much like my own.

Your donations have allowed me to take my study to the next step after 7 years of class instruction and spending a month in Bolivia opened my eyes to another culture and allowed me to view my own country in a new light. By giving financial assistance to Cornell students, your contributions have impacted my ability to get the most out of what Cornell has to offer. And by being granted this opportunity, I have gained more skills and perspective that will equip me with the means to impact the lives of others with what I will have reaped from a Cornell education and the generosity of alumni like you. Thank you again for making this experience possible and giving me new memories and experiences that will undoubtedly have a profound influence on the way I live my life.

Sincere thanks,

Rebecca Sullens







