

Dear Class of '55,

I would like to sincerely thank you for providing me with this scholarship which allowed me to take the Wildlife Conservation course in Costa Rica with Professor Andy McCollum. I am currently a senior, majoring in Environmental Studies and minoring in Civic Engagement. I chose this course because it perfectly combined my love for animals with my desire to spread the important message of conservation.

Thank you for letting me hone my skills to communicate the importance of conservation and preservation to the public. While in Costa Rica, I was able to experience first-hand the important conservation work being done in another part of the world. I have never known much about marine life or what specifically impacts it, but I finally got to learn. Our professor constantly challenged us physically on night patrols, intellectually during discussions about papers we were reading, and mentally by switching between English and Spanish in conversation.

With your gracious gift, I have learned about an entirely different field of work, practiced my language skills, and met some of the most amazing people. I was reminded of how important laughter and smiling are, especially in times when the world tries to trip you up at every corner. I now have a new-found love and passion for sea turtles, as well as a new respect for conservation workers everywhere. I know I will be able to use my experience from this class in future jobs and life in general. I will never stop talking about sea turtles and why it is important to protect them. I will never be able to thank you enough for this opportunity, but for a start here are some of my favorite pictures from the trip.

Pura Vida!

Danielle Polson '18



Leafcutter ant “garbage pile” where they take all their waste.



Another student in the rain in the forest. The trails became rivers.





The sunset on the rocky beach of Osa Conservation. It's a 20-minute hike through the forest, but well worth it.



We learned how to make homemade tortillas from one of the abuelas in Ostional.



Our favorite dog, Rocky, who followed us everywhere.