

ICEP PERU 2011



Daily Report

Ellie Kreischer and George Grygar

DAILY REPORT

July 2:

Our campers arrived at the barn with huge suitcases and smiles. We played a few icebreaker games: ninja tag and birdie on a perch. After moving into housing at Chimney, we met up together to talk about expectations around camp. After dinner, we challenged Vietnam to an intense game of kickball. This game was a pivotal moment for our group starting to bond and laugh together. We ended the evening with a cabin chat about your proudest moment.

July 3:

Group was on time for breakfast and ready to go. Today was a long day of logistics and policies and was a great test for the campers and their ability to focus- they did great! We had some reflective discussions on group dynamic and we were pleasantly surprised by our group's maturity.

July 4:

We woke up to a nice sunny day. In the morning we checked the weight of luggage and completed a laundry list of topics to help the group prepare for our trip. The kids completed leadership evals on the Chimney dining hall porch after having a quick share about one personal goal for the trip. This pre-eval activity helped them transition into evaluations and they completed them faster. After a mac n cheese lunch, we walked to Becket to say hello and play some gaga ball. By 3 we were back and getting our luggage together to board the bus for the airport. The airport was super easy and we got on our flight without a hitch.

July 5:

Today was our first day in Lima, Peru. The group responded extremely well to an overnight flight followed by a day of activities- the few hours rest time post landing was essential. They are bonding extremely well. When given the opportunity to separate they are maintaining their blob formation, often filling down time with games and songs. After down time in the morning, we toured the YMCA surrounds with Paco and Gonzalo and Rafa, a few of our hosts. We also received a nice hooded sweatshirt as a gift, which the whole group loves. We went to a market for the group's first foray into Peruvian junk food, bought calling cards (these turned out to be an ineffective method to reach people at home. The call center across the street was the cheapest, and the pay phones were the same price as the calling card), visited the local square where everyone pictured in front of a Simon Bolivar statue, and made our first currency exchange. Everyone's highlights of the day seemed to be dancing at night, where an hour of energy was spent forgetting to be embarrassed with our very American salsa skills.

July 6:

The group woke up to a sound of cardio kickboxing across the hall. The group packed all their luggage and brought it to breakfast. We ate a ham and cheese sandwich before heading to the YMCA's winter camp in Aspitia, a small tourist town in the coastal mountains. We toured the town by foot and ate a yummy lunch at a restaurant near the YMCA. The afternoon consisted of 4 hours of community service moving gravel to spread under the ropes course. The group worked hard and made the project fun by singing and creating rock sculptures. We finished

early due to a combination of cold temperatures, mist, and wind. Dinner was at the same restaurant and we slept at the YMCA's camp.

July 7:

Today was our last day in Aspitia. We finished the project- raking rocks, painting rocks, moving rocks, all to clean up the high and low ropes course. In the afternoon we went for a hike to the riverbanks of the valley. The group really enjoyed the scenic walk, especially the opportunity to see a local living arrangement of scraped together materials and the roaming animals; most everyone mentioned this as an eye opening experience. We transferred back to the YMCA that evening, enjoyed hot showers, and relaxed after dinner before cabin chat and bed.

July 8:

The group woke up at 8:30 and ate at the YMCA. A bus took us downtown for a tour of Lima. We started in Plaza de Armas and learned some information from our host, Rafa. We walked by foot to a nice church and then onward to La Cathedral. There we had an extensive tour in English of the artifacts ending at the catacombs to see old remains of famous Peruvians (group will get hungry on tour but the Chinatown lunch is a buffet and worth the wait). After the tour we walked to Chinatown to enjoy a huge buffet of chifa, Chinese Peruvian food. We included a group of four exploration of part of Chinatown before walking back to the market near La Cathedral for the group's first experience shopping. While shopping, the leaders and hosts enjoyed a much needed coffee at a cute little cafe. Back at the YMCA we ate dinner before attending a kickboxing or salsa class. The group was decided to split up which class they joined. We were exhausted by the end of the day and slept well.

July 9:

Today was a usual morning routine- wake up at 8, breakfast at 9, after breakfast we had a box drum lesson, learning various styles of rhythm. The group had a ton of fun, though they have a lot to work on in order to stay in any sort of rhythm. After drum lessons we spent two hours making bracelets and necklaces for a future fundraiser. After lunch we had our biggest service project challenge thus far; we visited our first and most demanding orphanage. The group really stepped up. We spent two hours dancing and singing and playing with the kids, including throwing a huge dance party. We then spent an hour feeding the orphans, which proved extremely difficult considering the mental and physical limitations of the kids. Our group responded well to the challenge by stepping out of their comfort zone with little hesitation. After dinner was free time and cabin chat, getting to bed early for the big 3 day project to come.

July 10:

The LOD woke us up for breakfast at 9. We packed small bags for Independencia to sleep for two nights and our service work clothes. We arrived at 10:30 to the YMCA office in Independencia, dropped off our stuff, and drove by taxi up the steep hills to the site of the service project: A medical center that needed a concrete wall to protect it from erosion. The group learned that our goal was to mix "volcanos" of cement using three ingredients and carrying it up a hill to the base of a medical center. Local community members had built wooden forms to pour the concrete into. The group worked hard until 1 when we traveled down the road to have

lunch in a small room in someone's house for an hour. After lunch, we continued to work until 5pm. Back at the YMCA we changed out of our work clothes and headed by bus to a gigantic mall to eat dinner in the food court. We slept back at the YMCA office, girls and boys divided on either side the room. The group had trouble falling asleep, but eventually settled down by 11.

July 11:

We started the day sore after our previous day of travel and service, devouring bowls of cereal and sandwiches to prep for another hard day. The group was excited to see captain crunch and fruit loops, the first "American" breakfast of the trip. We spent the whole day building the wall, with lots of buckets filled with dirt and concrete, as well as endless shoveling. The group worked very hard, seemingly earning the respect of locals and sponsors. After the project we challenged the local kids to a futball (soccer) match, everyone playing their part in a handful of close matches. The evening had pizza and a movie, another first for this group in Peru, and much appreciated after two hard days of work.

July 12:

This was our last day in Independencia. We work up to eat cereal and arrived at the work site early. The group showed signs of exhaustion from the two days of work prior but continued to keep their spirits up. The wall was continued to be filled with concrete while another group moved rocks to fill in the hole behind the wall. We took two breaks for oranges and lollipops. By 1:45 we had finished moving the last "volcano" of concrete, and left the site super hungry and tired. Lunch was had back at the YMCA office and consisted of sandwiches. After we drove back to the Lima YMCA to enjoy hot showers and dropping off our laundry. The night was uneventful with a yummy spaghetti dinner and rest.

July 13:

The morning was easy given the hard days in Independencia. The group had activities with Rafa and much needed down time. This was important as some in the group were beginning to get sick. The afternoon was spent at the television station- almost everyone's highlight of the day! We had two in the group participate in a game for the show, and being on front row, many more got arms autographed and t-shirts. The group got really hungry towards the end and Camilla (another sponsor) got every popcorn, which was a huge boost for group morale. Evening was dinner and free time.

July 14:

The group woke up for 9:00 breakfast. Together we walked 20 minutes to the orphanage Arco Isis. Our partner, Rafa, led the first activities of cheers and repeat-after-me games with the kids. It was raining so we had to keep the kids indoors in a small space with tables and chairs. Our partners brought coloring pages and crayons. The campers worked one-on-one with the kids to complete the project. After two hours, the kids from the orphanage left to go to school and we walked back to the YMCA. Back at the YMCA, lunch was served and free time followed. In the afternoon, we walked to the Anthropological museum. The tour was in English and highlighted the history of ancient Peru. As we finished the tour, the sun came out, inspiring an ice cream stop. We ate dinner back at the YMCA. In the evening, the campers had the choice of

playing sports and a few joined. Cabin chat was at 9:30 and straight to bed.

July 15:

In the morning we visited a market used by many locals. After initially wandering with little success, the group was happy with the unlimited CD and DVD selections. The afternoon in Miraflores was everyone's favorite. The bus trip wasn't very informative as we could barely hear the speaker, but the view of the city was worth the ride. A stop at Dunkin Donuts was another highlight for the group. They also enjoyed the hour and a half of free time for shopping. The group is pretty healthy at this point, but sporadic scratchy throats and mild fevers are making their way through the group, as well as beginnings of stomach problems.

July 16:

Breakfast at 9:00 at the YMCA. After Camila organized a service project in which we made small signs to remind the staff of the YMCA to save the planet. The campers delivered them to different offices of the YMCA. There was free time after the project and then lunch followed at 1:00. In the afternoon, we walked to the Arco Isis orphanage. It was our second visit, so the campers felt super comfortable. They split into two groups, one group with the older kids playing games, and the other group playing in the patio with the younger kids. The kids headed inside for a nap while we cleaned up the patio and indoor space. In the evening, dinner was at the YMCA and then we learned our to play the Peruvian box drum for the second time. Our teacher was amazing, one of the best in Peru. We cabin chatted at 10:00 and then bed.

July 17:

Today we were at the YMCA in the morning and the orphanage in the evening. In the morning we had a Peruvian cook lesson. It was fun for the kids to roll sushi, but the lunch was light and being that lunch is usually the biggest meal of the day, it left the group a little hungry. We went back to the orphanage in the afternoon. The group really enjoys this orphanage. There is a good mix of really young kids and some close to teens. This has been a great place to practice Spanish and interact with children eager for attention. We spent the evening packing for Cusco before cabin chat and bed.

July 18:

The group had a 5:30 am departure. The bus was late and we barely made our flight to Cusco. Twenty minutes before landing, Paco gave us some altitude (soroche) pills to take. They are a mixture of ibuprofen and caffeine, and they worked wonders. We landed in Cusco and immediately noticed the altitude. The group was bussed straight to the hotel and ordered by Paco to go rest until lunch. The group was really excited about being in a hotel and new place, so only some campers rested. During our process of checking into the hotel, the leaders and partners realized that we were missing some of our immigration papers for the campers. They were white pieces of paper that were your receipt of immigration at the airport. Our partner took 8 campers to the immigration office get replacements and pay the fine. Another camper headed to the hospital with George after many days of diarrhea. Lunch was at a restaurant near the hotel called "Valentina." Following lunch, campers continued to rest until dinner, which was at "Valentina" again. The menu was preset and delicious. Cabin chat was held in the basement of the hotel and then in-room time at 10:30. George checked the rooms at that time.

July 19:

The group woke up still feeling the effects of altitude. We encouraged drinking water and taking things at their own pace. We spent the morning at Sacsayhuaman Quenko with our Peruvian guide, Ronnie. This was an amazing sacred temple of the Inca's, with plenty of room to walk and see different structural work and natural landscape, all with ridge-top views of Cusco. We ate lunch at a nice tourist restaurant that everyone enjoyed. We spent the afternoon walking the city center, gaining more valuable history from our guide. The group was cold and tired, but overall kept a great attitude and the easy walking throughout the day helped them acclimate more quickly to the altitude. Dinner was spent at the restaurant closest to our hotel, which the whole group seems to really enjoy.

July 20:

Today we woke up and ate the hotel breakfast by 8:00. We checked out shortly after and boarded a bus to drive from Cusco Valley to Sacred Valley. We stopped for a quick visit with llamas and then continued onto Pisac, a market town that was perfect for the bulk of our souvenir shopping. The kids had one hour to shop in groups of 5. Everyone returned to the bus with armfuls of fun gifts. Lunch was eaten 45 minutes down the road at a buffet in a mountain town. The tour continued on to the chicharia and guinea pig farm. The kids were given a small amount of this fermented corn drink to try. The group handled it maturely. We also learned a fun coin toss game. Our next stop was climbing 180 steps to an Incan temple with beautiful views. At 4:00 we hopped on a tourist train to Aguas Calientes. Two hours later we arrived in the mountain/jungle town of Aguas Calientes at the base of Machu Picchu. Dinner was a buffet in the town and we went to bed early for our big day at Machu Picchu.

July 21:

Today was what everyone had been waiting for- Machu Picchu. Breakfast was at the hotel, which was great. We caught the bus at 8:30 and were up to the top by 9:30. After 3 hours of wandering, with Ronnie giving us history and sense of place, the group was ready to eat. We had an amazing buffet in town before catching the long sequence of train and bus back to Cusco. Dinner was pizza, which everyone enjoyed, and the evening was spent relaxing at the hotel.

July 22:

We woke up at 8 for breakfast. Ellie stayed behind to take care of two sick campers. The rest of the group headed to an orphanage for boys. They played some ice-breaker games led by Camila and then there was a spirited game of soccer until lunch. The group ate lunch at a small non-profit restaurant that helped fund the San Juan de Dios hospital which we were visiting that afternoon. The meal was amazing, complete with smoothies, veggie options, and dessert. We had a bit of free time before the afternoon service, so the group opted to sit in the sun of Plaza de Armas. At the hospital, we split into groups to complete the laundry, cleaning the kitchen, playing with the children, and husking corn for the chickens. We left by 5:30 after feeding the kids and doing the dishes. Dinner was at a local pizza restaurant and was enjoyed by all. Cabin chat was early due to a few campers who were not feeling well.

July 23:

After breakfast at the hotel, we spent the morning passing out flyers in the main square in Cusco. Everyone got really into it, finding it more successful to pass the flyers out to locals than tourists.

After lunch at the usual restaurant (to benefit the local orphanages) we went on a "real city" tour. Everyone enjoyed making bricks and commented on new perspectives. The group also had a second opportunity to try chicha, the local corn based alcohol. Dinner and relaxing was the evening activity again, followed by chat and bed.

July 24:

This day was almost exactly the same as the 22nd. We visited the same orphanages and this time we gave them gifts. George and Ellie used the morning service time to complete the mid-trip evaluations. In the afternoon, the hospital wanted us to stay indoors so we played in the center and helped them with dinner. Our last dinner in Cusco was held at a traditional restaurant that featured folklore dances and musical performances. The campers participated in some dances and creepy costumed creatures moved around the restaurant scaring people. We were bused back to the hotel and then a quick cabin chat before bed.

July 25:

Today we flew back to Lima. Everyone enjoyed Cusco, but felt ready to get back to the YMCA. Lunch was at the Y, and the afternoon was spent on doctor visits (Jake's second) and laundry and bank and grocery store and post office. This down-time before homestays was necessary to be ready for their transition. Homestays arrived after dinner with signs and balloons. It was great to see enthusiasm on both ends.

July 26:

All the campers arrived at the YMCA by 9:30 from first night of homestays. We joined the Peruvian teens to make bracelets for the morning. Before lunch we had a quick check-in meeting to hear about their first night and see if there were any issues to deal with. The biggest red flags were using small buses and campers having to pay for taxis. In the afternoon, the campers sold bracelets out in front of the YMCA and raised 200 soles. In the evening, the group played soccer with the Peruvian teens before going home for dinner by 7:30.

July 27:

The group met at 9:30, which was a perfect time. We spent the morning cleaning garbage on the beach. Lunch was back at the YMCA and we were off to the zoo in the afternoon. The group enjoyed breaking up and wandering on their own. It was nice for Team Gellie to walk around with the YMCA staff as well.

July 28:

Homestay day! The leaders met up with Camila, Rafa, and other volunteers to have breakfast at San Antonio in Miraflores. We followed this with ice cream and donuts, yum!

July 29:

Today was day two with homestay families exclusively. Fortunately there were no major problems. Everyone spent the day at parades of the mall or with the family in home. Everyone seemed to enjoy the two days experience, gaining valuable perspective of Peruvian culture. Team Gellie took advantage of the day off. We took a cab to Miraflores for 11 Soles, ate breakfast at Crepes and Waffles, toured the main square, where we visited the best local/seasonal

art market. We then took a cab downtown for 12 Soles, went to an art museum (free admission for holiday) and had pizza dinner.

July 30:

Campers arrived from homestays by 9:30. We worked in the morning to make bracelets and clean the tee shirts. The group ate lunch at the YMCA followed by free time to hang out together. In the afternoon, we walked about 40 minutes to the mall. There we let the camper and Peruvians form groups of at least 6. At 7:00 we ate together at Bembo's before the campers headed home with their home stays siblings either from the mall or after returning to the YMCA.

July 31:

Today was another day campers spent with their homestays away from the YMCA and rest of the group. Some got together and went to movies, some to the mall. Everyone stayed happy and healthy. The group seems to have bonded really well with their respective homestays. The group came back to the YMCA in the evening for dinner and their first night back with the group since the start of homestays.

August 1:

Today we went to the Country Club el Bosque (2 hour bus ride). The group loved this. We played soccer, basketball, sardines, sun bathed, ate ice cream and wandering the massive grounds. It was truly a day of relaxation, a nice treat for the group.

August 2:

We had much needed sleep-in and a late breakfast at 10. We learned that our cooking class had been rescheduled for later, so we took a quick trip to Starbucks. Our cooking lesson was to cook causa and lomo saltado. After the lesson, we had a bit of free time before walking to the mall to see Harry Potter. Camila bought the whole group soda and popcorn to enjoy with the movie. After the movie, we walked back to the YMCA to have dinner. The night was spent hanging out before bed.

August 3:

We spent the morning at the orphanage for the final time. Today was great because we got to spend more time teaching the children, rather than just interacting with them. This was great for our learning Spanish, and the kids seemed to love the 1 on 1 attention with the studies. Our group was sad to finally say good bye to the kids, but a great sense of fulfillment spread through the group after seeing the smiles on the kids faces, many of them kissing and hugging us goodbye. After lunch at the YMCA we did another fundraising project, selling our tie-die shirts for the benefit of the YMCA school. All the shirts were sold, bringing our total fundraising efforts to over 500 Soles, all with hand-made goods. We received a special treat in the evening with a final dinner with our host families. We enjoyed a slide show, great food, speeches and final farewells. Our group really enjoyed this final opportunity to spend time with their very influential families.

August 4:

Our last day in Peru. We woke up for a 9:00 breakfast. In the morning we completed two hours of service by helping the cleaning staff of the YMCA. A bit of packing before lunch. Lunch

was at the YMCA. We walked 25 minutes to the “Best Icecream” in Lima and the Incan market for last minute purchases. We returned with an 1.5 hours until dinner to pack and clean the rooms. The group finished early so a few campers went to the Metro grocery store with Ellie. At 7:30 we brought down our luggage and ate dinner. The bus was on time to bring us to the airport. We were greeted by homestay families for a final goodbye. There were a lot of tears and many rounds of hugs. Finally we made our way through security and to the gate. We boarded with plane with no hitches and handed out final evaluations to be completed on the flight.

August 5:

Today was a big day of travel. We returned to the US at 8:30. Bused back to Becket, with a stop for lunch, arriving at 3:30. The group was tired and nostalgic, but responded well to our need to get work done before their next day departure. We finished half our evaluations, got started on the slide show, played Gaga ball, relaxed, and capped off our final evening with an amazing reflective chat and star gazing, catching gimps of a dozen shooting stars.

August 6:

Our last day! Breakfast at Becket, kickball against Vietnam, finish evals, pack, slideshow, busy busy busy, lunch, hike to Chimney. We had a wonderful slideshow and debrief. The parents were happy and grateful, the kids reminiscent and satisfied. Yahoo!

SERVICE PROJECTS

The first service opportunity was at the YMCA's winter camp, Aspitia, where the group spread gravel over the new ropes course. In Lima, the campers visited the Arco Isis orphanage four times to play, help with homework, and teach games. At a different orphanage for mentally and physically disabled children, the group threw a party and assisted with dinner. At the YMCA main branch, the group completed a fundraising project by making bracelets and tie dye tee shirts to sell. The money raised was for the Arco Isis orphanage in Lima. In Independencia, the group worked for three days to mix cement and build a wall to protect a medical center from erosion. In Cuzco, campers visited two more orphanages to play soccer, help with meal times, and do chores around the property. The group also handed out fliers to promote a volunteer program at the YMCA. Back in Lima, the group finished the trip by returning to Arco Isis, cleaning up a beach, and supporting the staff at the YMCA with cleaning. The campers had a life changing experience connecting with communities and children in Peru while completing 60 hours.

July 6-7	YMCA winter camp in Aspitia	7 hours
July 9, 26, 30, and August 3	Fundraising at Lima YMCA	10 hours
July 14	Orphanage in Lima	3 hours
July 9, 16, 17 and August 3	Arco Isis Orphanage	8 hours
July 10-12	Independencia	13 hours
July 6, 16, and 27	Environmental Projects	5 hours
July 24	Hand out fliers in Cuzco	2 hours

July 22 and 24
August 4

Orphanage and Hospital in Cuzco
Cleaning the YMCA

10 hours
2 hours

Total hours

60 hours