

Dear Geneva CUSD 304 Board of Education,

We wanted to thank you for your support of our student trip to Costa Rica during Spring Break 2016. Back in October of 2014, you all graciously voted to accept our trip proposal that included a home stay, studying at a language school and many excursions. We ended up taking 19 GHS students with us: 14 girls and 5 boys that ranged from sophomores to seniors with multiple levels of Spanish. Some of the highlights of our excursions include visiting Jacó Beach on the Pacific Ocean; seeing waterfalls; seeing a volcano with the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest crater in the world; attending the Costa Rica national soccer team World Cup qualifier game; planting 75 trees on a farm as a service project; and taking 20 hours of Spanish language classes.

As teachers, we love seeing our students soak up the culture and enjoy learning opportunities that can't be found in textbooks or traditional classrooms. We know these students created memories and friendships that will last a lifetime. We thought you might like to hear what an amazing trip we had; and how well our GHS students represented our district in another country. Honestly, nobody wanted to come home!

Here are a few messages that students and the Intercultura Language School shared with us:

*"Thank you so much señoritas. You guys were a huge part of the reason I wanted to come on this trip. It was way outside of my comfort zone but honestly one of the best decisions I've ever made. I've learned so much and made so many memories and I am so grateful for this experience."*

- Maddie Brown, '17

*"This trip seriously changed me in the best way. I knew Geneva was a bubble but I never fully understood how small of a bubble until I got out and lived in another culture, spoke their language, etc. It was truly the best week of my life and I'm going back there as soon as I can! Thank you for putting everything together and giving us such an incredible opportunity to better our Spanish and ourselves in general!"*

- McKenna Connolly, '17

*"Muchas gracias señoritas! You have no idea how glad I am that I went on this trip. It would not have been the same without you guys organizing it all. This trip really boosted my confidence and I know that I will be going on future study abroad trips because of this incredible experience this week!"*

- Chelsea Brandt '16

*"I just want to say thank you so much for everything. For putting this whole trip together, making the best plans, and making sure that we were having a great time and learning. I just had the time of my life! And that's all thanks to you. I always felt like it was your main priority to make sure that we lived as "pura vida" as possible. Nothing compares to the amount of cultural learning that we could receive by experiencing it first-hand like we did. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to learn the Spanish language/Costa Rican culture and to get close to all these great people in this trip."*

- Nik Rosas, '16

*"It was such a pleasure working with both of you to plan your group trip and to meet you in person last week. In addition, everyone here at Intercultura was so impressed with the Geneva students. Such a polite, well behaved, and studious group (and funny to boot). Who could ask for more from a group of teens?"*

- Holli Barrett, Intercultura Language School Group Coordinator