Gabrielle Robertson

My trip to Colombia was a whirlwind. Every day was jam packed and it was truly an amazing experience. The days would start early, and would end really late, especially on the night we went to Tin Tin Deo. A lot of the time, I felt like I had sensory overstimulation. Listening to everyone talk in Spanish and then hearing them talk in English was exhausting. I tried to listen and concentrate on the Spanish, and while I was still processing the Spanish, someone, or sometimes three people, would start talking in English. Then I would have to listen and process the English, but before I knew it people were speaking Spanish again. The first few days were especially difficult, but day by day it got a bit easier. One of my favorite things about the trip was that by the end of it, the medical school students and I could converse, both in broken English and Spanish. Another great thing about the trip was how similar I felt like I was to the medical students. I thought they would seem so much older and more mature because they were medical students. But we were all around the same age. Even though they got to interact with patients much more than we did, it was so awesome to see how similar we all were.

It also made me really proud to see how well Fordham students interacted with patients even though we did not have that much experience with it. Everyone was mature, respectful, and kind. Travelling with everyone in the Fordham group was such a new experience for me. As an only child, I am used to having my alone time, which we had very little of while we were there. We were always in a group, from the time we woke up early in the morning, until we went to bed late at night. It was both a new and great experience to travel with a group of students my own age.

Again, everyone treated each other with respect and kindness, which made the experience worthwhile. I learned so much throughout this trip, not just socially but culturally. I was able to experience so many different aspects of Colombian culture, from food and salsa dancing, to interactions with people who grew up there. As similar as I felt to the people I met, the culture was definitely different.

Colombia is very different from New York. The cities were smaller, and the houses in nice areas were all fenced in. The distinction between poor and middle class people seemed to be more severe than it was in the States. They also ate a ton of meat here. While on our trip, we ate mostly traditional Colombian food. Meat was always included in lunch and dinner, which is not something I am used to.

Overall it was an amazing experience and I would highly recommend it to anyone who has an interest.