

\* Excerpt from my 4<sup>th</sup> grade school journal \*

June April 9 (1996)

1. There are two giraffes in the Brookfield Zoo.
2. The doorbell rang before I did my homework.

Social- Rainforests

Math- fractions

Writing- good copie of story

Music- play

Spelling- worksheet, confusing words

Reading- directions

Word-a-Day- conservation

Topic- stuck in rainforest for 1 month?

If I were stuck in the rainforest for a month I would first make a tent and a small fire pit. I would study animals and take a lot of pictures to show other people about the animals there. I would also study the plants. I would take a lot of pictures to show people. When I would get home I would try and help stop the people who wreck the rainforest.

Saw

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### **Personal Statement**

**How does the program content relate to your present and future academic and career goals?**

**What aspects of your personal experience have prepared you to live and study in a foreign country?**

**What are your objectives for your time overseas with CIEE?**

As you can see from my 4<sup>th</sup> grade journal, I have been passionate about environmental conservation issues since I was very young. When I first heard about the study abroad program in Monteverde, Costa Rica, I thought that it was a perfect fit for my personality. I am passionate about conservation issues and I am excited to learn about these issues in depth on a biological level. The idea of studying plants, animals, and ecosystems in their natural environment would be a great opportunity for academic and intellectual growth. I love to learn and I know that I would be a very eager student and open to new experiences, ideas, opinions and opportunities.

In the summer of 2002, I spent two weeks on a mission trip in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. This trip opened my eyes to issues in Latin American countries and made me eager to learn more about the people through a more extensive visit. The idea of living in a foreign country, new culture, and different language is both exciting and intimidating. I have studied Spanish language and Latin American culture for six years and I am excited to experience it first hand. A goal of mine is to learn more about the Costa Rican culture and to appreciate and respect cultural differences on a deeper level. I look forward to creating lasting relationships with people in Costa Rica and to learn about their personal outlook on their country. I am positive that it will be overwhelming to be surrounded by a different language, but I feel well prepared for the

adjustment.

I have always been open to new adventures. This past summer I participated in a five week whitewater canoe trip on the Seal River to the Hudson Bay in Northern Manitoba, Canada. I canoed, portaged, and camped in rain, wind, and sun. Seven other young adults and I carried all of our food and necessities on our backs and had no contact with the outside world. I learned that I can have a positive attitude through the most physically, mentally, and emotionally straining situations. I enjoyed living in close proximity to nature and I think that the study abroad program in Costa Rica would be an exciting new challenge.

While attending the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I have taken a variety of biology, ecology, and environmental studies classes. Learning about conservation biology issues has made me feel strongly about working directly in the environment. I am concerned about how current legislative actions in the United States are impacting environmental issues, and I feel that there is a lack of awareness about their true global implications. In the future, I hope to educate others that this is not just a problem in a far away rainforest, but a serious issue affecting everyone's health and safety. The study abroad program in Costa Rica will point me in the direction that I hope to go in the conservation biology field.

The study abroad experience will be full of challenges, but I feel that I have the ability to be successful in adjusting to new situations. I understand that these challenges are an important part of living and studying in Monteverde, Costa Rica, and that this will be a once in a lifetime opportunity.