

## ECUADOR AND GALAPAGOS ISLANDS 19<sup>TH</sup> JULY TO 15<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST

This has been the most wonderful month of my life where I got to experience a whole different world. I had the most amazing time working on project work to benefit the local rural community and meeting lots of fantastic people. I have put together a picture diary of my time in Ecuador. Knowing that I have helped in various projects to make the lives of the local people easier for decades to come, makes me feel very privileged to have been part of this. I would like to thank my sponsors for making this possible:

It has made me realise that our lives are much easier here in the UK where we have warm houses, running water, easily sourced food, comfortable beds, sanitation and hot water. These are things that I will never take for granted again. I will never forget my time here or the local community that I met and helped. Knowing that I have made a difference to these wonderful people is heart-warming.



Thank you to the following sponsors who helped me to achieve this:

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### Week 1

After our flights from London Heathrow to Colombia and a further flight from Colombia to Quito in Ecuador, we travelled by road to our first camp. (Camp Maquipucuna). This camp was just north of Quito, located in a cloud forest. Here we took part in an environmental project which was to

prepare the ground and help to build an orchid garden for the local community. There are around 450 species of orchid growing here. This was part of a conservation project to protect the variety of species which attracts many visitors who come to see them in their natural habitat.



We also had the chance to visit the ancient historic capital of Quito with its beautiful churches and buildings.

## Week 2

This was probably the most amazing and unforgettable week of my life. We flew from Quito to the Galapagos Islands. This is where Charles Darwin had his inspiration for the theory of evolution. This is the most beautiful place on earth and I feel so lucky to have visited. Our team took part in various activities such as cleaning up the beach and visiting the stunning cactus gardens. We learned to snorkel and I saw amazing wildlife native to this part of the world. I swam with sharks and turtles, got close to rays and even chatted with a penguin!

These are all moments in my life that were probably once in a lifetime and I will cherish these memories forever.



**This was just the best experience, to get so close to these beautiful creatures.**



### Week 3

We travelled by boat to our next camp – Camp Chilli Urku which is in the heart of the Amazon. Here we were welcomed by the local Kichwa community. We helped to plant a nursery where the local people grow plants to preserve the ancient knowledge of medicinal plants. Our group painted signs for the nursery and got to work making doors for a communal storage facility. We played with the local children on our rest times and got to try our hand at traditional weaving. On our day off, we visited the monument at the middle of the world Latitude 0 degrees 0' 0". I can say that I stood in the middle of the earth!





**Learning to weave.**



**Laying a path in the nursery garden.**

#### Week 4

We travelled by road to Camp Kuri Kucho. This was situated 3000m above sea level in the Andes and the altitude here made the project work take a bit longer. We learned the art of pebbling and lay the pebbles on the uneven road to make it easier for the locals to transport their goods, and also for the children to walk to school. The landscape here was very dramatic and was dominated by the Cayambe Volcano. We helped to build a water tank using recycled plastic bottles to help the local villagers to collect and access water easier.



Having a well earned rest after building the water tank.



**Playing with some of the local children.**



**Celebrating a camp mates birthday.**



Time to sadly come home. The expedition leaders thanked us for our help, but I enjoyed every second of my trip and would like to thank all at The Mason Trust for your help for contributing towards my fundraising. I am one lucky girl to have had this wonderful opportunity. I feel that my trip was so fantastic and I have left my footprint on the other side of the world and given something back.

Regards

Lyndsey Pollock