

# MID-TERM REFLECTIONS FROM THE PROGRAM MANAGER

## COSTA RICA JULY 2025

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We are now at the halfway point of our incredible journey through Costa Rica, and as I reflect on our program thus far, it has been such a pleasure witnessing the growth and development our students have been demonstrating as they navigate our travel with their academic studies. We hope you have been enjoying the pictures and videos of our adventures on Instagram, as well as our travel blog [Grade 11 & 12 Costa Rica July Photo Blog - Global Summers Academy](#) that our incredible Activity Coordinator Chloe has been posting. She has tried to capture as many images and video clips to share with you so that you can feel connected to these amazing moments in Costa Rica.



Students have swam in the Pacific Ocean and witnessed amazing sunsets in Playas Del Coco, ziplined high above the trees, hiked through the Cloud Forest of Monteverde, experienced first-hand how agrotourism is utilized on a coffee plantation, and witnessed the beautiful Arenal volcano in full view before it was completely covered in a blanket of clouds. They have also been fortunate to spot 3 toed sloths and a family of howler monkeys in the trees as we entered Arenal.



We are now back to our home at Toro Blanco in Coco, and the students are excited to get back into their regular routine. I know many parents may have been a little anxious about their child's readiness to be away from home on their own. The students continue to show more maturity each day and are making the most of what you offered them this summer through this GSA program. The investment made is one that will prove invaluable and will not soon be forgotten.

In their classes, they support each other, are collaborative, and help one another keep up with the fast-paced curriculum. When students have missed home, felt ill, or felt stressed about schoolwork, other students have shown empathy and supported their new friends as they worked through the challenge. In such a short period of time, our students have built a strong, close knit community. In the near future, for some of these students, post-secondary education is a next step. This program has provided them with a 'test run' of what being away from home, managing their time independently, and living in a small space with someone new can be like, and how to navigate the ups and downs that inevitably occur during that time.





As teachers we have continuously encouraged them to embrace a positive mindset during our travels, especially when they are faced with a new experience or feel challenged. Our amazing staff continue to encourage them to be in the moment and appreciate all the opportunities the program affords. So, when they start to feel tired, frustrated, confused, or impatient, we try to reinforce the power of being positive, or as they say here in Costa Rica, Pura Vida!

As we continue our time here in Coco, there are many more exciting excursions planned, including scuba diving, snorkelling, a cooking class with a local chef, and community service at a local school. Chloe is also busy planning more activities for the students, including tie dye, karaoke, SUP yoga, and a salsa lesson!



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We are only 10 days away from coming home. It is clear that although our students are excited to be reunited with their families on July 26<sup>th</sup>, they are also going to miss the friendships they have formed. Thank you, parents, for giving your children this invaluable opportunity for personal growth, adventure, and experiential learning. I look forward to seeing them continue to develop and take advantage of the opportunities still to be had over the next few weeks.

Pura Vida,

Liz Piccioni  
Program Manager

