

Samantha Shuh
Peru Quest 2008 Reflections

Even a month after returning from my experience in the Andes, it's difficult for me to piece together everything that I learned. Every limit that my body had, whether it was physical or mental, was breached, and every sense was overloaded with anything that Peru had to offer.

Before this trip, my only time outside of United States borders was a one-night excursion to Vancouver, B.C. to check out the nightlife that 19-year-olds might not get to enjoy within the country's borders. Naturally, I was nervous and excited for an adventure that would be stimulating for me on so many different levels.

Never before have I been surrounded by a group of completely unique individuals who each had something wonderful to bring to the table, who each faced their role head-on, and who each inspired me to conquer the silly fears that I had.



But more inspirational than the group was the people of Peru themselves and the adventure they allowed me to have in their communities and even inside of their homes. Language and culture barriers aside, they allowed us to build them stoves and slap mud on their walls, or prick their child's fingers and give them medication. I will never forget the mother who handed me

boiled potatoes to warm my hands when it hailed in the remote village of Poques --and then made us the best cup of coffee I have ever had in my life.

The trip to Peru is something that I will cherish, and it is the stepping stone into other volunteer opportunities that I will join in the future.