

**Rebekah Wagner**  
**Global Impact: Peru Quest 2008**

**Reflections on interacting with community members**

The interactions between community members and our volunteers were unforgettable. At times the language barrier was very strong because many of the native people spoke Quechua but through smiles and non-verbal cues we were able to communicate with each other. When I first signed up for the trip, I could not even come close to imagining the exchanges that we had. One of my most memorable experiences that I had was during our first overnight in the community. We had just finished our dinner, started the campfire and three members of the community arrived to play traditional music for us. The Peruvian professionals taught us how to dance and we had a marvelous time.

**Reflections on the stoves**



As I became more successful with building stoves, I was able to become more aware of the impact that these stoves were making on the family. First, I couldn't believe the trust they had in us. They allowed us to come into their homes with supplies and build an entirely new unfamiliar stove in their house. I felt very lucky that the families not only welcomed me with kindness but also helped build them with us. It was such a sense of accomplishment when the stoves were completed that we usually were able to celebrate with the family. Overall, I was very surprised by how much I enjoyed building the stoves! They were labor intensive but the

opportunity to be in a home in a remote Peruvian village is a once in a lifetime chance. Also, I felt very satisfied knowing how these stoves will improve the health of the family. I am very happy that everyone was given an opportunity to build them because it is such an important part of our mission.



**Thoughts on the medical campaigns**

This trip really opened up my eyes to the medical needs of small rural villages. I was able to recognize the necessity for an organization and volunteers to serve these communities. Participating in the medical campaigns introduced global health to me. As an aspiring nurse, this trip really inspired me to become more aware of health globally along with

establishing future career goals of serving in communities similar to those we served in Peru. I am also very thankful for the time that I spent with health professionals of all areas. I found the connection of a mentor to be very helpful for most of us students and admired all of their patience.

### **Reflections on being a part of a volunteer team**



I would have to say that I have never had the opportunity to be a part of such a fabulous team. All of the volunteers had their own strengths and specialties that were unique to them and everyone was so accepting of them. I really thought the effort of organizing reflection groups, buddies, and roommates was done so carefully and allowed everyone to feel like they had support. The most valuable aspect for me as a student

was that I was on a team with professionals from many different professions and generations. I was able to interact and learn from all of them and that opportunity was incredible.

### **One more thought...**

Along with all of the benefits of being a part of a strong team this trip has also helped me become more confident as an individual. I have never traveled outside of the United States so to have this experience it has made me thrilled for future adventures around the world. I now know that there are many ways an individual can make a difference and I am so fortunate to have experienced that.