

Georgia 4-H Global Citizenship and Environmental Experience in Puerto Rico

This past summer I had the opportunity to participate in the Global Citizenship and Environmental Experience in Puerto Rico with Georgia 4-H. About 15 youth and 4 adults attended from all over Georgia. This was the 2nd year Georgia 4-H has given youth the opportunity to travel outside the continental United States. The purpose of the trip was to learn about the cultural and environmental aspects of Puerto Rico. Every part of the trip opened our eyes to the differences between our culture and their's. Since the majority of the citizens speak only Spanish, we constantly had to find a way to communicate clearly. It was difficult at times but the challenge was also a lot of fun.

The first night we were there we met a few 4-H'ers of Puerto Rico. Two of them traveled with us throughout the whole week. They were a great help as they told us about their favorite local tourist attractions. They were also our translators since they spoke both English and Spanish fluently. Being able to hang out with them all week gave us the chance to better understand their culture and 4-H programs. By the end of the week we all felt like they were our best friends and we still kept in touch.

We also learned a lot about their environment and how it affects their culture. We hiked through the El Yunque National Rainforest, kayaked through the ocean and Mangrove Forests, swam in the Bioluminescent Bay, and also visited the Puerto Rico 4-H office. The 4-H'ers in Puerto Rico really focus on the environment and how to better the earth when choosing their specific projects. Here in Georgia we focus more on leadership and public speaking skills.

This trip was a once in a lifetime experience for all of us. I now understand that cultural differences vary but 4H'ers all over the world have similar values and wish to "make the best better".

Camille Odom

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