

Features

MK student shares life memories from Uruguay

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Pilot co-editor

Her favorite childhood memories include sitting in a circle with friends. She was not, however, playing duck-duck-goose or ring-around-the-roses.

She was sipping tea from a gourd and passing it around the circle.

This GWU freshman's childhood memories vastly differ from those of most of her classmates.

Though she is American by birth, Emily Ingram is Uruguayan by culture.

"They call us third culture kids," Ingram said, in reference to how she and other MKs (Missionary Kids) have been described. "We are not all-American, but we are influenced by our parents who grew up in the U.S."

Ingram was born in High

Point, N.C., but moved to Costa Rica when she was three. Her parents studied Spanish in the country for a year, then moved their family to Uruguay to be missionaries with the International Mission Board (IMB).

"Some MKs are resentful they have to live in different countries," said Ingram. "It took a long time for me to decide that I wanted to be a part of my parents' ministry."

Before coming to Gardner-Webb, Ingram was actively involved in many aspects of her parents' mission work. Among other activities, she wrote prayer e-mails, translated for mission teams, participated in sports evangelism, led Bible studies and taught children's Bible school.

Along with helping in her parents' ministry, Ingram also kept herself busy with schoolwork. Though she attended Uruguayan national schools for

several years, most of her education was completed at home under the instruction of her mother.

"Homeschooling gave me flexibility," said Ingram. "I would work hard and complete two weeks of work in one, so I could travel on a mission trip with my dad."

Ingram added that the transition to classroom learning at Gardner-Webb has been a challenge.

"I was not used to taking timed tests, but the professors have been good to help me adjust," she said.

At GWU, Ingram is double-majoring in International Business and Spanish. She dreams of using the business degree she is acquiring to provide new job opportunities for the Uruguayan people.

"I want to reach the upper-class [in Uruguay] with the gospel [of Jesus Christ]. Providing them with jobs will

open the doors for me to reach them," she said.

Ingram explained that the educational system in Uruguay is competent, but most Uruguayans do not pursue an education past the high school level. The job market is sparse and even people with degrees have a hard time finding work.

"There are trained doctors who drive taxis because they can't find jobs," said Ingram.

Though she acknowledged the country's troubles, Ingram happily reflected on the simplicity of life that her Uruguayan childhood gave her.

Ingram grew up very close to her family. "The hardest part about living in Uruguay was that we were so far away from our grandparents and extended family," she said.

Although they now live on different continents and are separated by 13,000 miles, Ingram maintains a close link

with her family in Uruguay. She and her mother e-mail every day. "She is my lifeline," Ingram said of her mother.

Ingram's GWU friends notice the pride she exhibits in her Uruguayan culture.

"It's fun to watch her," said freshman Nicole Austin, Ingram's roommate.

"She plays a tape music recorded off of a Uruguayan radio station a lot. She also drinks tea all the time. Tea is a big part of her culture."

Ingram described how one tea-drinking tradition symbolizes the priorities of the Uruguayan people.

"Community, unity and sharing are important to the Uruguayans," she said.

Whether shared between two people or 10, adults or children, said Ingram, they display these characteristics "by uniting together in a circle to share a tea called matE."



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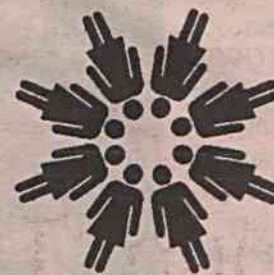


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