

Sophomore tells story about time spent on Mexican border

Meredith sophomore Nina Borum spent last semester abroad on the Mexican border with the Borderlinks program.

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Staff Writer

Stepping out of my comfort zone, I decided to spend the second semester of my freshman year on the U.S./Mexican border. The program that I participated in is called Borderlinks; its main focus is to educate people on the issues of the border, which in turn will motivate people to actively respond to the pressing issues.

I encountered some serious challenges on the border. The first roadblock was the language barrier. I took four semesters of Spanish in high school, but memorizing vocabulary words in high school did me no good in Mexico. Luckily, we had some Spanish classes in Tucson, A.Z. before we left for Mexico. The language barrier didn't truly hit me until I had my first homestay in Nogales, Mexico. The family was so welcoming, but I had no idea what they were saying. I went to bed early that night to avoid conversation. I couldn't spend my



Borum and Amanda Beasley in the Centro.

semester avoiding conversation, so I decided to get serious with my Spanish. As I got more comfortable speaking Spanish, my families got more comfortable in laughing at how I butchered their language. This was discouraging at times, but I quickly got over it and began to laugh with them.

Prior to the trip we were warned that the living conditions weren't luxurious. I thought to myself, "No big deal. It's not like I'm from the rich side of the tracks." But no matter how poor I've been, I've always had a bathroom and

running water. At my first homestay, I found myself holding my bladder to avoid the makeshift toilet outside. I ended up relieving myself instead in a urine filled bucket that was in someone's bedroom.

Like most people, I wanted a nice warm shower daily which was seemingly impossible. I went two weeks with only two showers! By the end of the trip I was happy to have a bucket of cold water to bathe in.

Another challenge was struggling to understand the severe poverty that these people were forced to live in. Throughout the trip we,

liated to speakers and participated in discussions, and skits to try to explain this. We learned about economic organizations and globalization. I am still slightly confused and struggling to find ways to end the poverty that I experienced while in Mexico. I was also challenged to learn more about my government and how it impacts the people in various parts of world. I am grateful to be an American citizen.

I was not entirely unfamiliar with poor living conditions and people in need because I once traveled to Montego Bay for a week long mission trip. That trip did not compare to what I experienced in the Borderlinks program. This program forced me to face realities that I did not want to face.

Actually, it made me live in these realities and experience what it feels like to have cardboard walls, dirt floors, and unsanitary water. Spending a semester in Mexico truly made me re-evaluate my Christian walk. I asked myself if I was truly doing all that Jesus commanded me. After meditating

on that thought, Jesus' words came to my heart.

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink...I needed clothes and you clothed me...I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine you did for me" (Matthew 35-36,40).

I was reminded that, as servants of Christ, Christians are not only to spread the truth of his love, but also to show it by investing time, energy, resources, and even money to the less fortunate.

I encourage anyone who has a heart for the poor and wants to make a difference to participate in the Borderlinks program. It will definitely change the way you see things forever. Not only will you be helping to improve someone else's life, but you will also have improved your own in the process.



Borum with her homestay mom.

Attention: All Officers of Student Organizations!

2003 Officer Training Workshops Held September 3 thru 9

Wednesday, Sept. 3

6:00-7:00 p.m. General Session, Oak Room

7:00-8:00 p.m. Officer Workshops, Wainwright Suite

Thursday, Sept. 4

3:30-4:30 p.m. Generald Session, Oak Room

4:30-:30 p.m. Officer Workshops, Wainwright Suite

Tuesday, Sept. 9

3:30-4:30 p.m. Generald Session, Oak Room

4:30-:30 p.m. Officer Workshops, Wainwright Suite

These workshops are designed with you in mind; therefore, your presence is required. Manuals will be distributed at the General Sessions.

Light Refreshments will be provided between sessions.

Sponsored by the Office of Student Activities and Leadership Development, Phone 760-8338.