

Re: Recommendation For Ecology Project International

To whom it may concern,

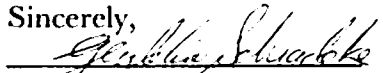
As a biology teacher at the Latin School of Chicago, I have the responsibility to expose my students to as much hands-on data collection and research as possible. It is often hard to find worthwhile and memorable experiences for my students but during the 2008-2009 school year, my students and I were very privileged to take part in EPI's Island Ecology Program in Baja, Mexico. I cannot speak more highly of this program and it is for this reason that I write a letter of recommendation on their behalf.

The Island Ecology Program is fantastic in many ways. Firstly, the students were able to relate their data collection to an actual research study being performed by local university students. Students were constantly stimulated to ask questions of their data and form hypotheses. It was even a great catapult for teaching more advanced ecological techniques. Secondly, the students were busy every day! If they were not involved in echinoderm data collection they were presenting research or participating in team building exercises. EPI's chaperones are very patient and knowledgeable and all of my students formed great friendships with them. Thirdly, not only are students learning the ecology of the island on this trip but they are also experiencing it by sleeping on the island for three nights. EPI had everything organized for the island. Our food was cooked freshly every day by a private chef. The materials for the tents were all available to use, everything was clean and sanitary and more importantly, I never once doubted our safety on the island.

The logistics of a trip like this can often be a nightmare for a teacher but not when working with EPI. Once we confirmed the dates, EPI took care of our flights, sent us information packets on the trip and compiled data on each student such as copies of passport and health information. I had a student with a severe peanut allergy and EPI took extra care to inform every chaperone we met along the way. EPI also sent a nice trunk of materials to educate the students about the island before our trip. I felt that everything was organized for me throughout this whole experience and for this I am very grateful.

Not only was this a memorable experience for students but it was also the same for the teachers who traveled with the students. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about a trip you are organizing through EPI. I can assure you that they will take great care of you!

Sincerely,



Geraldine Schmadeke

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