



Adrenaline levels rise as *Hannah Zeiler* explores Costa Rican and Guatemalan schools suited for the more adventurous Spanish learners



history, more than 20,000 AMIGOS Volunteers have gained a life-long understanding of community service, while strengthening multicultural understanding, and friendships in the Americas.

AMIGOS offers five-eight week summer programs in Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panamá, Paraguay, and Uruguay. Additionally, AMIGOS also offers a special environmentally-focused January-term project in Costa Rica in which volunteers work alongside Costa Rican youth in trail maintenance and light construction projects, while learning about ecotourism and exploring beautiful rainforests. Volunteers live with Spanish-speaking host families and work in small teams to execute health, education, and other major projects in host communities, which are usually located in rural areas. Volunteers communicate in Spanish to facilitate community meetings, teach youth education classes, and share stories with their host families. AMIGOS Volunteers not only gain language skills and cultural understanding, but they also develop a profound appreciation for community service.

The Amistad Institute

The Amistad Institute is located in the Central Valley only two hours from either coast, and no more than four hours from any of the top tourist destinations. The Spanish Language Department of Amistad Institute is committed to excellence in teaching, training, and lifelong learning. There are plenty of activities on offer to keep even the most restless student busy — from team sports like soccer, indoor soccer, basketball, volleyball, baseball, etc. to solo sports like surfing, windsurfing, canopy touring, mountain biking, rappelling, kayaking, snorkeling, scuba diving, swimming, table tennis, tennis, bowling, etc.

The Center for Cultural Interchange

The Center for Cultural Interchange, a nonprofit international exchange organization, offers language school programs for teens and adults. With schools located in both San José and the Manuel Antonio National Park, students have the opportunity to improve Spanish proficiency, live with a Costa Rican host family, and actively explore the breathtaking wonders the country has to offer.

Students take Spanish lessons during the morning, receiving personal attention with class limited to six people. During their free time, they can take advantage of many cultural activities and outdoor adventures. In San José, students can learn how to dance salsa, explore the Arenal Volcano and hot springs, visit La Paz waterfalls and Tortuga Island, and even tour a coffee plantation. There are also many opportunities to play sports, especially fútbol (soccer), with both international students and locals. In the heart of Costa Rica's exotic national park, the school in Manuel Antonio offers many excursions including snorkeling in the Pacific Ocean, rainforest canopy tours, sea kayaking, and dolphin watching.

Centro Lingüístico Conversa

Centro Lingüístico Conversa has been dedicated to teaching Spanish as a foreign language for over thirty years. They have two locations: a six-acre campus in the mountains of Santa Ana, and a school at the western end of the capital, San José. Their methodology for teaching Spanish involves forming homogeneous groups where language learning background, age, and aptitude are taken into consideration. Their instructors are skilled in blending Spanish conversation and grammar to meet the individual language needs of group members.