

# THE SHOW ME COSTA RICA PROJECT

A NINE-DAY SPRING BREAK JOURNEY TO STUDY BIOLOGY IN COSTA RICA

## Chapter V



Explore  
the possibilities



# The Students

The participants of Show Me Costa Rica are intelligent and hardworking student leaders who attend Vashon and Gateway High School. The students were selected through a competitive application and interview process. Based on their environment and social circumstances, these students are what society considers “at-risk” – at risk of having babies as teenagers; at risk of never finishing high school or achieving their dreams; at risk of never knowing the world beyond their neighborhood. We beg to differ!

These eight students are “*at-promise*” – *at-promise* of overcoming obstacles and achieving their dreams; *at-promise* to become the first in their families to graduate from college; *at-promise* for expanding their worldview beyond their neighborhood.



**Karli Anderson** is a 15-year-old junior at Vashon High School with a goal of one day becoming an OBGYN. Karli dreams of helping the homeless and giving back to her community. Karli is a member of Vashon's volleyball, basketball, and soccer teams. She is also on the honor roll and a leader in Vashon's annual biology music video.

**In her application to Show Me Costa Rica, Karli writes:**

*"Knowing that I was highly recommended to be a part of The Show Me Costa Rica Project swept me off of my feet, but knowing I had to travel on an airplane had me second guessing whether or not I could overcome my fear. I realized that this was a unique experience that I didn't want to miss out on. Traveling to Costa Rica is the perfect opportunity for me to get away from the violence and show my little brothers that they can do anything they dream as long as they put their mind to it. I can't wait to see a real wild spider monkey because it has always been one of my dreams since I was a kid and it's going to be so heartwarming when it happens while I'm in Costa Rica."*



**Fatima Ndon** is a 14-year-old freshman at Vashon High School with a

dream of becoming an entrepreneur. She is a member of Vashon's Flag Line, Sister Circle, and JROTC. She's really excited to learn more about Costa Rican culture and wants to be able to look back on this and say "I accomplished stepping out of my comfort zone in order to travel internationally during my freshman year."

**In her application to Show Me Costa Rica, Fatima writes:**

*"I believe that this experience will help me gain a good sense of knowledge about different cultures other than my own. I will use this experience to teach others around me what Costa Rica is really like. By joining this program, I hope to step outside of my comfort zone and overcome my fear of public speaking. This opportunity will help me set a trend for my younger siblings and I know that at the end of this project, I will be a better and stronger leader."*



**Shireif Rowe** is a 15-year-old freshman at Vashon High School with a goal of one day becoming a sports commentator. Shireif dreams of going to college and spending a semester studying abroad in Japan in order to learn more about the culture. Shireif participates in JROTC and a Food Science program with the Diversity Awareness Partnership maintaining placement on the honor roll.

**In his application to Show Me Costa Rica, Shireif writes:**

*"When I was 13 years old, my older brother became the first in our family to travel internationally through The Show Me Costa Rica Project. My brother and I are competitive with each other and I always want to do better than him. Once he travelled internationally that also became one of my goals. My brother told me several stories and showed me photos of his trip which made me excited to go on my first plane ride and to see different types of monkeys."*





**Domonic Archie** is a 14-year-old freshman at Vashon High School who one day dreams of becoming a doctor in the medical field. Domonic loves helping others due to being raised by a family full of wonderful nurses. During his free time, Domonic loves to volunteer for shows on Netflix and blogging on Tumblr. Domonic is a part of the honor roll and his part of a leadership program through the Diversity Awareness Partnership.

**In his application to Show Me Costa Rica, Domonic writes:**

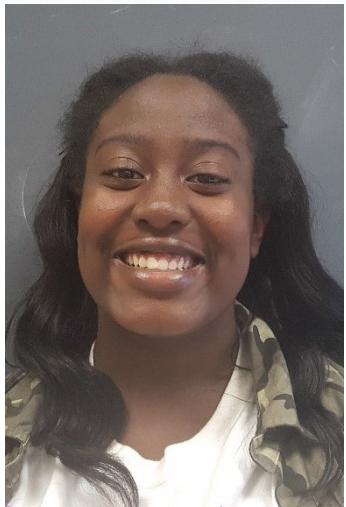
*"I always learned about volcanoes in school but I am eager to hike up a real volcano for the very first time! I also really look forward to my first time travelling out of the country because I know that this is just the beginning of my travelling adventures. I just know that there's more out there in the world for me to experience and I was destined to see the world!"*



**Jason Merideth** is a 17-year-old senior at Gateway High School. He enjoys running and studying for school. In his free time, he likes to play Yu-Gi-Ho and with his dogs. Jason is very excited for this program and is looking forward to this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

**In his application to Show Me Costa Rica, Jason writes:**

*"By going on this trip, I will not be socially oblivious to what is going on in the world. I will be forced into situations that I normally would never have to worry about, and by doing this it would keep me on my toes and force me to adapt to the situations. I'm forward to this new life experience."*



**CaRosa Johnson** is a 16-year-old junior at Gateway High School. CaRosa loves listening to music and during her free time you can find CaRosa singing, hanging with friends, and dancing like no one is watching. She also loves going to church and believes it's the best place to be on a Sunday.

**In her application to Show Me Costa Rica, CaRosa writes:**

*"I have never been outside of the country and I want to explore the world and tell people about it. I want to learn more about Costa Rica's food, religion, government, and their biodiversity. I can't wait to tell my family about my experience."*

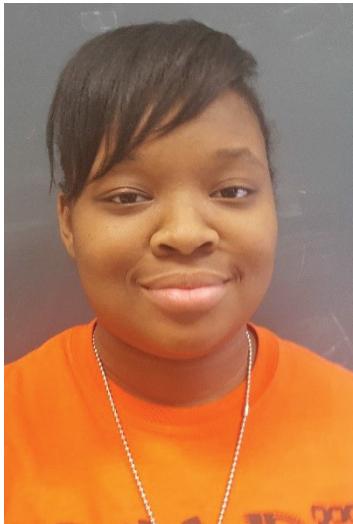


### **Rebecca Harrington**

is a 17-year old senior at Gateway High School. Her interests include linguistics, music, computer sciences, and most academic fields. In her spare time, Rebecca can often be found reading, building robots, or struggling through college applications.

#### **In her application to Show Me Costa Rica, Rebecca writes:**

*"I think this program and the trip will give me a glimpse at life in the future. I will have to learn and adjust to a whole new environment, a new culture, and a new language. I will gain valuable experiences with reorientation and acclimation. I will also have the opportunity to see how other people view their world and future."*

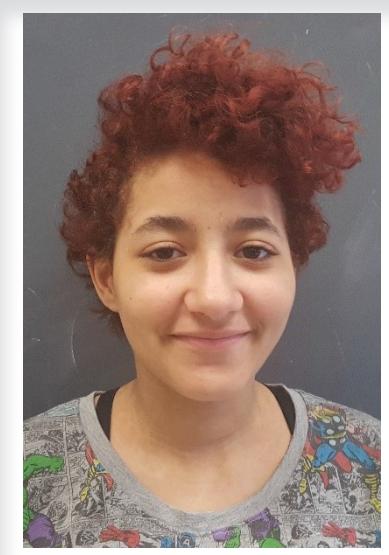


### **Taylor Powell**

is a 17-year old senior at Gateway High School. Her interests and passions include being a member of the drill team, robotics work, and JROTC. She is a very intelligent, nice and outgoing individual who is looking forward to strengthening her academic background by joining the Show Me Costa Rica project.

#### **In her application to Show Me Costa Rica, Taylor writes:**

*"I want to major in biomedical engineering in college. Show Me Costa Rica will give me a good learning experience so I can be prepared for college. I want to go on adventures, see new things, and have amazing experiences in high school."*



### **BreOna Morgan**

is a 14-year-old freshman at Gateway High School. She likes the sciences, singing, drawing, and being active and playing sports. BreOna is a confident, responsible, and kind-hearted individual who is a rising leader at her high school. She wants to be part of the Show Me Costa Rica Project to travel and learn what the world has to offer.

#### **In her application to Show Me Costa Rica, BreOna writes:**

*"Not only is this going to help my education, but it will also give me ideas on how I could help around the world and what types of things need to be done so people who need help in other places can actually receive the help. With this program, people will see that I'm responsible and can handle being out of my comfort zone."*



 **Morgan Chavers** is a 17-year-old senior at Gateway High School. She is interested in traveling, and learning about world culture. She is passionate about cheerleading, JROTC, and helping others achieve their goals. Morgan likes to read, work, and to improve her leadership skills in her free time. She is currently applying for colleges and scholarships to study political science in college.

**In her application to Show Me Costa Rica, Morgan writes:**

*"In all of my years of living I never came across an opportunity like this one. In the school district I grew up learning in, great things come far and few. By being able to take part in studying abroad in Costa Rica I will gain new perspective on life and Central American culture. Studying in a different country is going to offer many new activities and interests that I never may have discovered if I didn't take this opportunity."*



**Heather Mudd** is a 17-year-old senior at Gateway High School. She is interested in anything having to do with hockey and proves to be a huge Blues supporter. She is passionate about writing poetry, novels, articles, or songs. She loves it all because it is an expressive way to convey the way people feel. In her free time, she loves to write (which explains the writer's callus on her finger), loves to be with the ones she cares about, play video games, draw, or play with her dogs.

**In her application to Show Me Costa Rica, Heather writes:**

*"I want to be part of this program because I already go to a school of many cultures and I'd like to explore one in depth. I have never been able to explore another country and their way of life before."*



**Lorell Jones** is a 15-year-old sophomore at Gateway High School. He likes philosophy and learning about other cultures. One of his passions is JROTC and aspires to join the Air Force. He likes to practice for the drill team and play video games in his free time.

**In his application to Show Me Costa Rica, Lorell writes:**

*"I want to be part of the Show Me Costa Rica project so I can broaden my horizons and learn more about the world. I want to learn how other people live that did not grow up in St. Louis."*



**Oteria Lawrence** is a 15-year-old sophomore at Gateway High School. She has excellent grades and works towards maintaining a 3.7 GPA. She likes to read books during her free time. She also enjoys playing for the Lady Jags Volleyball Team.

**In her application to Show Me Costa Rica, Oteria writes:**

*"Being a part of this study abroad program is a chance to explore and experience new things. The Show Me Costa Rica program will be a new way to be a part of a new community. Growing up in St. Louis, there is not much of an exposed environment. Personally, I look forward to learning about new places and discovering new ways to learn from different people."*



**Angel Mariscal** is a junior at Gateway High School. He enjoys playing soccer and was on the Gateway varsity team. Other than playing soccer, he enjoys helping out others with math and other STEM subjects. He likes to be involved in school activities and gets along with everyone he meets.

**In his application to Show Me Costa Rica, Angel writes:**

*"I want to learn about Costa Rican culture and how it differs from my own while also learning about the diversity of their environment. This program will allow me to gain knowledge and give me a head start at my future goals of attending college to study business."*

# The Trip Leaders



 **Wilhelmina Rodney** was born in Guyana, South America where she received her primary education. She earned a Bachelor's Degree in Secondary Education from West Virginia State University. Mrs. Rodney has worked in the academic environment for many years and in 2000 she joined St. Louis Public Schools. Mrs. Rodney enjoys working in a diverse community and in 2010 she came to Gateway High School where she serves as a School Counselor. Wilhelmina believes going to Costa Rica provides her with the intangible opportunity to experience and learn another culture, as well as to build relationships with students. It is important to her the culture of everyone is celebrated and shared.



 **Sylvester Chisom** is an entrepreneur and he was recognized as one of Ebony Magazine's Top Young Entrepreneur's. Along with co-founding his first business, Showroom Shine Express Detailing at the age of 17, Sylvester has written 2 books including the best selling, "The Young Entrepreneur's Guide to Success 2.0". Sylvester has taken up the cause of motivating youth to success through entrepreneurship. Sylvester is excited about traveling with The Show Me Costa Rica Project. This will be his third visit to the country and actually has a younger cousin who is half Costa Rican.



 **Boahemaa Adu-Oppong** is a Ph.D student in the Evolution, Ecology and Population Biology program at Washington University in St. Louis. Her thesis is titled the "Assembly and Stability of Microbial Communities". She was the Co-Director of the Young Scientist Program and hopes to continue coordinating science outreach events throughout the St. Louis area. This will be Boahemaa's second time visiting Costa Rica and she can not wait to witness the biodiversity of the tropics and explore the terrain with the students.

# The Trip



The Show Me Costa Rica will be traveling to Costa Rica and Nicaragua for nine days through EF Educational Tours. This company has more than 45 years of experience and has found that its tours help students become better communicators, go on to earn top grades in college and attribute to their advanced global awareness.

With well-protected national reserves and an unparalleled diversity of wildlife, Costa Rica is the jewel of Central America. The **Arenal region** showcases an active volcano, hot springs, and a broad range of flora and fauna. In **Granada**, we will visit a monastary. Finally in **Guanacaste**, we will be able to experience wide range of biodiversity including sloths, toucans, and howler monkeys. Each student is obligated to keep a personal journal throughout their trip and will learn how to blog via social media sites, documenting their experiences to keep their loved ones informed. Upon their arrival home, the students will incorporate experiences into a presentation at The Show Me Costa Rica Appreciation Event.

**The Projected Costs**  
**\$2, 0 x students = \$ 0**

The package for each student includes the following:

- ▶ Round trip coach flights
- ▶ All-inclusive insurance for lost bags/delayed flights
- ▶ Three meals a day, soda/dessert not included
- ▶ Eight overnight stays in budget hotels
- ▶ On-tour transportation
- ▶ Comprehensive sightseeing of natural attractions
- ▶ Full-time tour director
- ▶ Entrance to: Tortuguero canals boat ride, hot springs, Lake Arenal kayaking, La Fortuna Waterfall, Rincon de la Vieja National Park

## Sponsor a Student

Show Me Costa Rica provides a phenomenal opportunity for students in inner city St. Louis. However, it will be impossible without philanthropic support from members of the community like you. One way that the students would like to pay forward the sponsorship is by implementing a biology tutoring program within their school. They plan to tutor biology students that will be taking the Missouri biology End-of-Course exam in order to help close the achievement gap and help their classmates realize that they are at-promise. Through your financial support, you can help these bright students grow from an international cultural immersion, and gain exposure to a world far beyond their high poverty environment. All donors will be invited to the Show Me Costa Rica Appreciation Event as well as receive a hand written thank you note written by the students. Additionally, investors donating **\$1,000** or more will receive a special gift created by the student. Each student is required to pay a \$100 down payment fee, purchase his or her passport and raise \$500 toward his or her trip cost.

# The Support



Ms. Samantha Lurie is a eighth-year teacher at Vashon High School. Originally from Lansing, Michigan, Ms. Lurie moved to St. Louis after joining Teach For America in 2008. She graduated from Earlham College where she had the opportunity to travel and study abroad in Israel, Senegal, and Spain. Ms. Lurie is excited to watch her students benefit from international travel.

As a trip leader and volunteer for Cultural Leadership (Cultural Leadership is a non-profit educational program for St. Louis high school youth- students learn social justice leadership skills through the lens of the African American and Jewish experience), Ms. Lurie saw the positive impact of students embarking on a journey of new cultural experiences while gaining the courage to step out of their comfort zones.

Ms. Lurie designed The Show Me Costa Rica Project in 2012 in an effort to broaden her students' horizons outside of their own community while reaching their goals on a larger scale. After raising \$7',000 over the last 3 years to travel to Costa Rica last year, Ms. Lurie saw the immense impact it had on her students. Ms. Lurie is proud of all of the sacrifices her students made in order to reach their goals and she is looking forward to seeing the impact this project will have on the next group.

*"My students are go-getters! They inspire me every day by how ambitious they are and how hard they work to reach their goals. My students are talented; I know that with this international cultural experience they will positively impact their community and will leave their mark on the world!"*

**For questions or concerns about The Show Me Costa Rica Project please contact  
Samantha Lurie at: [showmecostarica@gmail.com](mailto:showmecostarica@gmail.com).**



**Every student has an empowered adult to attend parent meetings and assist with fundraising. The parents and family members of the Show Me Costa Rica students have committed to raising money for the trip collectively by working concessions stands at professional and college sporting games. They are dedicated to giving their children a life-changing experience through The Show Me Costa Rica Project.**

**To donate online**  
please visit Corps Member Education Foundation at:  
[www.cmf.org/program/show-me-costa-rica/](http://www.cmf.org/program/show-me-costa-rica/)

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**Thank you for your investment in our students!**  
Corps Member Education Foundation supports Teach For America corps members and alum in raising money for educational trips. It is a 501(c)3 so any donations made are tax deductible.

