

Building Mutual Understanding

As a Gilman Scholar, I understand that I have a responsibility to represent the United States and contribute to building mutual understanding with the Bali community. I am delighted to make an impact on the communities we visit especially during the Ubud immersive activities. I plan to actively engage with the host community, learn about their culture, and share what it means to be an American in a respectful manner.

To share what it means to be an American, I will emphasize my values and experiences in the United States with open conversation. I know that many people I meet may have only met American tourists and never had meaningful conversations, so I'll focus on building relationships. I have a high curiosity about their way of life and culture. I'll ask questions and actively listen to their responses to discover our similarities and better share my American identity in a way that is genuine. Nonetheless, our differences are a great way to share my personal experiences. I'll be able to share stories about growing up in a diverse community, my school organizations, and pursuing STEM in college. This is a great opportunity for the community to gain knowledge of the perspectives and experiences of a minority in the United States. I will approach sharing what it means to be an American with an open mind and respect.

Cultural immersion and community engagement are signature experiences during many activities in the Bali program. I'll begin the program with a language lesson and a cultural scavenger hunt with the local community. This is a great time to practice interacting in their native language and build relationships. I am also excited to visit KIM Women's Center and meet the founder whose goal is to create a space where Balinese women can support each other. This organization reminds me of my clubs in the United States and I'll speak to the founder and other women about this connection. The women at the center will also give us a cooking lesson and I wish to bond with them to learn about the history and traditional dishes we create. As a Jamaican American woman, I can share my own experiences and knowledge of traditional dishes which is a great way to connect with women. Furthermore, we'll interact with the children of the community at The Green School. It will be interesting to speak with them and hear about their experiences. I am willing to learn from the community because I understand that cultural differences make us unique.

I am honored to have the chance to represent the United States and make a positive impact on the communities we visit in Bali. As a first-generation American woman, I am looking forward to sharing my experiences with the community and listening to their stories, and values, and embracing their traditions. I will approach this experience with respect, empathy, and a desire to understand and appreciate the Balinese culture.