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*Please answer the questions below. If more space is necessary to complete your final report, please attach additional pages to this form. You should send copies of this report to your scholarship coordinator at The Rotary Foundation, and host and sponsor district governors and counselors.*

**Describe your academic achievements (honors, and or degrees received, etc.) and discuss how this experience will further your pursuits (professional, academic, volunteer, etc.)**

I dedicated my studies in Uruguay to exploring various aspects of its society; past and present. I was able to take courses covering health care, history, economics, geopolitics, epidemics and social issues facing the Uruguayan population. I also enrolled in a course which covered the history of Latin American culture. I had originally only planned to take Spanish courses during the first month of my stay in Montevideo but I felt that they were so helpful with my language advancement, I continued to take lessons on and off throughout my experience. Since my stay in Montevideo was only 9 months, I was not able to earn a degree but the things I was able to learn and understand have helped to broaden and expand my education and outlook on life. I am certain that I will use the knowledge that I acquired in Uruguay to aide me in understanding other aspects of all foreign countries.

During the final month in Montevideo, I took a Berlitz Spanish language proficiency test and received an eight on a ten point scale. This proves that I can “communicate effectively and appropriately even in demanding communicative tasks and situations, like conducting a meeting. Can participate easily in social and professional conversations. Can deal comfortably with most subjects over the telephone. Can receive business people, give a report and make a professional presentation in an open meeting, and make sales presentations. Can speak easily and with different shades of meaning, and can comprehend speech with ease, even on demanding subjects.” This knowledge of the Spanish language is an incredibly important skill to have as a working citizen of California. The number of Spanish speakers is increasing everyday in California and Spanish skills are often a requirement for employment opportunities. I am currently applying to graduate school nurse practitioner programs and the education that I received in Uruguay covering its health care system and epidemiology have helped me to understand medicine on a more global scale. I learned many valuable facts regarding the health care system of a developing country. The classes that I was enrolled in not only helped me to better understand medicine in a foreign country but also gave me the opportunity to share information about the American health care system. My professors and fellow classmates were extremely eager to understand and compare health care in the United State with that of Uruguay.

**How has your experience changed your outlook on your host country and sponsor country? How have you contributed to The Rotary Foundation's mission of world understanding and peace?**

From the first day I arrived in Montevideo, I was treated with nothing but respect. The Uruguayan people proved their warmth and compassion to me within the first weeks of my stay. Throughout my time there, this opinion never changed and I left in November feeling that I was leaving a second home. The relationships that I managed to form in Montevideo are extremely strong and I am confident that I will maintain contact with some for years to come. Uruguay has such a warm and open culture which makes it hard to feel unaccepted. Living abroad will always have obstacles and one will inevitably experience culture shock to some degree but the beauty of staying in one place for an extended period of time is learning about the differences and learning to celebrate them rather than reject or judge them. I admit that there were times when I was frustrated or confused by certain aspects of the society in Montevideo, but I learned to understand them and focus on why they did some of the things they did. I found that many of the Uruguayans were eager to share their country and its culture with me. I was often invited to things that they felt would be a representation of a practice that we did not experience in the United States. They have so much pride in where they come from but at the same time are insecure that other parts of the world do not take an interest in their culture and practices. They want so badly to have people visit Uruguay and experience its warmth but also understand that it is very small and relatively unknown to many. There were many jokes amongst me and the Uruguayans that I would return to the United States and advertise Uruguay as a wonderful vacation spot. I do feel that it would be a great place to visit if even for only a few days. I left with a large and profound understanding of the country of Uruguay, its history, culture, people, problems, etc. I learned so much from my time there and have returned to the U.S. a more mature and aware person. I am extremely confident that the Rotarian population in Montevideo never once doubted my interest and dedication to learning as much as I could about Uruguay.

My time in Montevideo was also a very effective way to teach the Uruguayans a little about U.S. society and our culture. I found that many people who had never traveled to the United States had very exaggerated views of our society. Many people in South America in general have only experienced the U.S. through the television. This has given them a false idea of what an average American life is like. Most people in Uruguay had met American travelers but yet had never formed true friendships with them. I found that many people were just as interested in my life in California as I was in their Uruguayan lives. It was wonderful to be able to share and discuss the differences between our countries and cultures. It was even better to realize that we had so much more in common than we thought. I was in Uruguay during a very controversial time in American politics which made my stay in Montevideo a bit complicated. With the U.S. elections taking place in early November, many of my friends in Uruguay were eager to hear my political perspectives and opinions. I found that they are many things about the United States that many other parts of the world don't clearly understand. Overall I feel that I have helped many people in Montevideo understand the United States a little better. More often than not, when I would meet someone for the first time their first question

directed to me after asking my name and where I was from was why I decided to live in Uruguay of all places. Many explained to me that they didn't understand why someone from a "first world country" like the United States would ever willingly move to a "third world country" like Uruguay. I think that having a Rotary representative in places like Uruguay helps them to understand that there are many people in the United States who have a deep interest in other countries and cultures. I explained that I went here to meet Uruguayans and to advertise that I was willing to help in any way possible. It was a great way to also advertise the dedication that Rotary has to unite countries of the world and form international friendships and bonds.

**Give specific examples of how you served as an ambassador of goodwill. How did you make a difference in someone else's life? Was there a particular experience that changed your life?**

During my stay in Montevideo, I was a volunteer at a school called Escuela Horizonte that served children with brain developmental disorders. Before I arrived, Rotary of Montevideo and Rotaract of Montevideo had begun a project called "Brindando Horizontes", to raise money for the school. They had been seeking an international Rotary club to do a Matching Grant project to aid them in raising funds. Upon my arrival, I began learning more and more about the project, and after volunteering at the school for a number of months I gained a profound respect and love for the students and its administration. After holding a meeting with the director of the school, Margot Aguerre, she informed us that the school was in desperate need of a van. Many of the families with students at the school are very poor and could not afford to have their children transported to and from school. The students often missed class and therefore were not advancing as quickly as they could. With the van, employees of the school would be able to supply transportation to all of the necessary students. A couple of months into my scholarship, I decided to ask La Jolla Sunrise Rotary, my host club in the United States, if they would be interested in participating in the Matching Grant project that Rotary of Montevideo had been organizing. I had supplied the club with a lot of information pertaining to the school and they immediately expressed an interest in the project. Over time, the project developed more and more. On November 7<sup>th</sup>, my honorary Rotaract club, Rotaract of Montevideo, held a Bingo to raise money for the Matching Grant project. We had anticipated raising a thousand dollars but much to our surprise were able to raise \$1300.00. The day was a great success and it was a relief to know that all of our hard work had paid off. The money raised through the Bingo was the final fundraiser needed to reach the financial goal of Rotary and Rotaract of Montevideo. Soon after, upon hearing the success of the Bingo fundraiser, La Jolla Sunrise confirmed their participation with the project and quickly forwarded their generous donation. I am keeping in close contact with the Rotarians in Montevideo and will be continuously updated with advancements of the project. They anticipate they will be purchasing the van in March of 2005. In order to thank La Jolla Sunrise for its participation, Rotaract of Montevideo publicly expressed its gratitude to the club and myself for our help with "Brindando Horizontes". The ex-president of Rotaract of Montevideo gave a speech at the weekly Montevideo Rotary meeting and we were given

a standing ovation. The club also had a plaque made for La Jolla Sunrise which I will be presenting to the club in January. They were so thankful for our participation and I was so proud to have been able to aide in making such a significant impact. A Matching Grant project of this size is virtually unheard of in the Rotaract community in Uruguay and they were extremely happy about the accomplishment. They have set high standards for the clubs in Montevideo and are extremely grateful for our help and participation. This project will greatly improve the lives of the students and staff at the Escuela Horizonte in Montevideo and I feel very lucky to have had the opportunity to help with such a generous donation to the Uruguayan community.

My final meeting of Rotaract of Montevideo was very difficult for me because I knew I would be forced to say good bye to many people that had become very dear to me. At the end of the meeting, they called me up to the front and held a special ceremony to make me an official honorary Rotaract of Montevideo member for life. They awarded me an official Rotaract pin and read me a small passage they had written. I was told that I had had a strong impact on their opinions of people from the United States and that I had helped them to see another side of our culture. They also had bought several gifts to remind me of my Uruguayan experience. I was given time to read them something I had written in an attempt to put into words the appreciation I had for their warmth and generosity. Overall leaving Montevideo and ending my role as an Ambassadorial Scholar was bitter sweet. On one hand, it was extremely difficult to walk away from such an enriching and beautiful experience. The Uruguayan culture was so warm and accepting and I was able to learn and grow so much as a person. As difficult as saying good bye was, I did leave with a sense of accomplishment and success. I feel that I was able to form very meaningful and profound relationships with Rotary in Montevideo and have truly helped to spread international understanding. I am sure that they were convinced of my dedication to their society and feel that I had a strong impact on many people there. I have lived abroad in other countries and had had wonderful experiences but nothing quite as special as my time in Montevideo. I arrived in Uruguay with the beliefs and principals of Rotary behind me. I arrived with a goal to strengthen the ties between the United States and Uruguay. I was given the opportunity by Rotary to immerse myself into Uruguayan society and communicate to the Rotarians that I was there to help in any way that I could. I was given the opportunity to speak at numerous Rotary Club meetings throughout my stay in Montevideo and was able to share my experience and my host country with Rotarians in Uruguay.

**How would you describe Rotary to friends, colleagues, and family? How would you describe the Ambassadorial Scholarship?**

Rotary is an extremely large international organization that was started for both personal professional development and also to contribute to society. Its members are all professional and respected men and women of their communities. There are Rotary clubs in many different countries which makes it a wonderful way to unite the world and to create international friendships. I have attended Rotary meetings in the United States,

Slovenia, The Czech Republic, and Uruguay. In having such an eclectic experience, I have discovered that Rotary is very consistent with many of its rituals but that it also greatly varies depending on the country. It appears to serve different purposes for different societies. I have always felt completely comfortable and accepted when attending Rotary club meetings. The Rotarian community has proven its professionalism and warmth. I was honored to be an ambassador of Rotary and was grateful for the doors it opened for me in Uruguay. I instantly had the connection of Rotary with the members I met in Montevideo and it helped me to quickly form very strong ties abroad.

The Ambassadorial Scholarship is a wonderful opportunity for anyone who wants to aide in community development, international understanding, and one who also has a personal desire to experience living abroad in a foreign culture. The scholarship provided me with the most amazing experience of my life and allowed me to feel like I was making a contribution to not only an international community but to the United States as well. It was a wonderful opportunity that requires a lot of work and personal strength but one that brings endless rewards and benefits. The international collaboration between clubs was inspiring and I feel that I have helped in uniting two regions of the world. As the world is changing and becoming smaller and smaller, ties like this become increasingly important. I am proud of what I have accomplished and look forward to delivering my post-scholarship presentations in San Diego. I am so grateful for organizations like Rotary that focus on the importance of international understanding and goodwill.

**How have the materials or training that you received from The Rotary Foundation and your sponsor and host Rotarians prepared you for you success as an ambassador of goodwill? What specific suggestions do you have for improving the orientation process?**

Before leaving for Uruguay, I was given no formal training or orientation. I did have the opportunity to meet with a previous Ambassadorial Scholar who had studied in Chile. It was extremely helpful to hear about her experience and hear the advice she offered for the transition into South American living. I do feel that a formal orientation is necessary for outbound scholars. I think it would be helpful for scholars to gain a better understanding of their role as a Rotary Ambassador and be given tips of what to expect during their stay in a foreign country. I personally had lived abroad twice before in other foreign countries and had experienced the difficulties of transition into another culture. Had I not had that experience, my first months in Montevideo would have been much more difficult. I understand that considering there were only two outbound scholars from district 5340 during the 2003-2004 year, a formal orientation may have been difficult. If an orientation is not possible in the future, I feel that a time to meet with previous scholars is essential and I would be willing to aid in any way possible to assist Rotary in the preparation process for future scholars. The handbook that was sent to me was helpful and did help to answer various unanswered questions that I had. I was also able to read about the experiences of other scholars through stories on the Rotary web page. This also helped to give me a better idea of what to expect in Uruguay.

I was able to spend a substantial amount of time with my host club, La Jolla Sunrise Rotary, before leaving for Montevideo and this was wonderful because I was able to learn even more about the beliefs and fundamentals of Rotary. Becoming involved in the start of a Rotaract Club in San Francisco also taught me a lot of crucial information that helped me to become an active member upon my arrival to Montevideo. From my experience in San Francisco, I learned that Rotaract was a great way to meet young people in the community and become involved in the institution of Rotary at the same time. Many clubs in Uruguay did not allow women. I was always welcomed to speak at these clubs but do feel that it may have been difficult to truly become immersed in the activities. Rotaract is a great way to become involved and to feel like a part of the group.

**What advice or information would you provide to future scholars about living abroad as a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar, cultural differences, representing Rotary, and your sponsor and host Rotary clubs?**

Everyone knows that living abroad in a foreign country is not always easy. There are many luxuries that we are used to in the United States that do not exist in other countries. With a sense of humor, this lacking can be humorous but I have to admit that there were days when it was simply said; frustrating. I sometimes had to remind myself that these minor differences were all part of the adventure of living abroad. In terms of cultural differences, the most difficult adjustment was adapting to the machismo mentality that exists in Latin America. Uruguay is one of the most advanced countries and appears to be trying to gain equality for women. There are still many Rotary clubs in Uruguay that do not allow women in their clubs. I was always completely welcomed to attend and speak at these clubs but it often changed the environment of the meetings. Growing up in the United States, we are used to a stronger focus on racial and gender equality and it took some time to adapt to these differences.

The Ambassadorial Scholarship requires a lot of personal strength. I think scholars need to understand that there may be many personal obstacles to overcome. Adjusting to a new culture, society, language etc. can be very overwhelming and difficult especially when not surrounded by other students experiencing the same feelings. During my stay in Montevideo I was not in contact with many other foreigners or exchange students which allowed me to fully immerse myself in Uruguayan society but also made it difficult to find people who understood my frustrations. There were times when I felt very homesick and alone and longed to be able to talk with my friends and family without having to worry about long distance costs and bad phone connections. Living for nine months in Montevideo was an amazing, life changing experience, but that does not mean that it was always easy. I think all scholars will have their ups and downs and knowing that it is normal to experience those peaks and valleys sometimes makes it easier to get through the hard times. I would never have passed up the opportunity because I know that the hard times did make me stronger as a person and I realize that I was able to overcome many things.

I would also greatly recommend contacting local Rotaract clubs in the area. I know from my personal experience, it was the easiest and most effective way to get involved in the community of Montevideo. I feel it is a great resource for any scholars living abroad. In addition to being a good outlet for Rotary involvement, it was also an effective way to meet young people in the community and form friendships. When living alone in a foreign culture it is important to find ways to meet the local people and interact with them personally and not only professionally.

**How will you continue to stay involved in Rotary? Would you become a member of Rotary or Rotaract, recommend candidates for the scholarship, and participate in orientations?**

I really look forward to staying involved with Rotary in the future. I am planning to reconnect with the Rotaract club here in San Francisco and continue my participation with them. I would highly recommend the Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship to anyone. I am very proud of the things I was able to assist with in Montevideo, of my representation of Rotary, and of overcoming personal obstacles that present themselves when living abroad in a foreign society. I would be honored and willing to participate in future orientations geared toward preparing scholars. I know that I was very thankful for the advice and insight of past scholars and would love to assist in the same way. I am too young to consider joining a local Rotary club at this point in time, but I will consider it for the future. I am very impressed with my experience with Rotary and would very much like to join and continue to support scholarships like the Ambassadorial Scholarship.