The first Maymester in Honduras took place from May 19th through June 5th, 2003. The School of Agriculture has had a program in Honduras for several years, but this was the pilot trip for the School of Education. Six people in all went on the trip. It was a diverse group in that we had one professor, one consultant who recently received her Masters Degree, a Ph.D. candidate, a Masters student, a student working towards his teaching certificate, and one undergraduate student. This site will allow students, faculty, and staff to gain insight into our experiences.

**Day by Day in Honduras**

Monday, May 19th - Our flights left O'Hare International Airport at 6:15 AM. For those traveling from Lafayette, it made for a very short night and long morning. Flights went well. Customs was quite easy though it is better to be sure you speak Spanish or have an interpreter with you. Our luggage made it there safe and sound. We were greeted by Nancy Waldron and her son who were waiting with bottles of cold, refreshing water. It was an interesting ride to El Centro de Kellogg where we would be staying. The roads out of the city are curvy and there are no lines painted on them. It made for quite an exciting ride swerving around trucks and busses. We arrived safely at our destination and had a relaxing afternoon and evening. We were picked up and brought to Ana's house. Ana is a married mother of two beautiful boys who earns her living by catering for people at her home or where they choose. All of her food was delicious and everything was homemade. After a nap and some relaxation, Ana brought us dinner. We hit the sack pretty early and were ready to go the next day.

Ana and her family | The building that would be our home base at the school
Tuesday, May 20th/ Wednesday, May 21st - We walked to the cafeteria for breakfast then headed over to the school. Nancy let us use the teacher's resource room as our "home base" where we were able to leave back packs and such. We were able to walk in and out of the classrooms and introduce ourselves to the teachers and students. The staff and students were very welcoming and open to having us in their classrooms. Ana brought us lunch, as she would everyday we were there, and it was delicious. The afternoon was spent in the classrooms we did not see in the morning. In the evening, we were able to begin making plans about visiting the rural schools we were to see. We brought art supplies from the US to work with students at two other schools.

Most of our evenings were spent doing some preparation for the following day, meeting to discuss work to be completed for the 205/285 projects, and processing our experiences of the day.

Thursday May 22nd- Jardin de Ninos- Preschool and Kindergarten- The classroom was a big open room with cement floors, and the walls were covered with minimal decorations. Eloisa introduced us (in Spanish) and Amanda began to teach the children the song "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" in English. Amanda also has a background in sign language, so she taught the students a few words in sign language such as "please", "thank you" and "sorry." After doing the song a few more times, we began the art project. Eloisa and Jean Paul were often called upon to translate for us. The students were comfortable talking to us in Spanish, and did not seem to mind the delay while we waited for translations. We quickly picked up phrases to tell the children their masks were pretty (Que lindo), creative (creativo), and we loved them (Me encantan). Even the classroom teacher made a mask which the students found very amusing. Something unique to that classroom were two wild dogs (perros) that wandered freely in and out of the room. It was weird to us, but an everyday occurrence for the children; one of the many cultural differences we would come across on our trip.
After the masks were completed, we played with the children outside for a little while before returning to Alison Bixby Stone School. In the afternoon, we spent more time in the classrooms and got to know the teachers and students.

Eloisa explains the morning activities
Amanda teaching the song, Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes
Two students practicing the sign for 'Thank you'
Jean Paul helps a girl tie the string to her mask
Sherry and Amanda with their new friends

Playing on the swings after all of their hard work

A group picture with the classroom teacher
Friday, May 23rd - This day we went to another rural school called Escuela Dionisio de Herrera. We were greeted by the students who were lined up along the sidewalk holding the flags of Honduras and the United States of America. They clapped for us as we walked down the sidewalk. It was an overwhelming experience to have such a warm welcome. The students ranged in age from 3-12; preschool through fifth grade. All of the students then filed into one large room where chairs were set up. They all took their seats and we were at the front of the room. We did a similar routine in the school, but this time Lee and Jean Paul taught the song. Amanda taught some signs and Sherry was our resident photographer capturing this all on film. At this school, we made paper bag puppets with the children. However, Lee had the fifth graders make a special project, a quilt that represented who they were as an individual. We left the remainder of the materials with the classroom teachers so they could use them in future projects or as rewards. Both of these experiences in the schools left us with a feeling of gratefulness for all that we have in our country and in our schools.

In the afternoon, we returned to ABS to prepare for the Family Sports/Game Day that would take place on Saturday.
Even the young students paid attention... Sort of

The Preschool/Kindergarten class with their completed masterpieces

The First graders show off their hard work

Grades 2, 3, and 4 display their creativity
Grades 5 and 6 make a quilt representing what is special about themselves

Sherry takes a picture of us enjoying our refreshments that were provided

Saturday, May 24th - We arrived at the school at 7:30 to help set up and get ready for the day. It was a successful day with many families and friends coming to show their support for the school. It was a neat experience to visit and talk with the parents of the students we have already gotten to know. There were some language barriers, but overall we were able to communicate with each other.

In the evening, some of us were able to socialize and spend time with the teachers from ABS. This was an excellent opportunity to get to know the teachers in a casual setting.
Family and friends enjoy eating and relaxing in the shade

Jennifer explains the rules of the Cake Walk

Lee was 'volunteered' for the 'Splat' game

Lee and John organize the students for the 100 meter dash

Sunday, May 25th. We traveled to St. Lucia and Valle de Angeles to do some sightseeing and shopping. The towns had cobblestone streets, beautiful churches, and housing of all different socio-economic levels. We had lunch at a restaurant called Casa de Abuelos where we enjoyed a homemade tipicos meal. We returned for more shopping and were well worn out upon our return to our rooms.
Monday May 26th- Friday May 30th - This week we got down to work. Each of the 205/285 students picked 2 teachers with whom they would work for the week. They were able to learn the goings on of the classroom, teach a lesson, and experience first hand what a teacher does all day. One of the mornings was spent visiting the school Eloisa taught in before coming to Purdue as a Fulbright Scholar. It was a big difference compared to the rural schools. It was two-stories, had a computer lab, library, cafeteria and large play area for the students.
Lee helps the 3rd graders with a project

The 2nd grade lines up to go back to class

John teaches his class about poetry

Shane begins to explain the rules of a new game in P.E.
Jean Paul explains evaporation and condensation

Amanda talks with the 2nd grade about friendship

Lee helps a student at the computer

Sherry works on an art project with the 3rd/4th grade class
Sunday, June 1st- Today was for relaxing and packing because we were leaving the next day (very early) to catch our bus to Copan to see Mayan ruins.

Monday, June 2nd- We drove to Tegucigalpa to catch our bus. It was a long ride through the winding roads. The first stop was San Pedro Sula to drop off/pick up passengers and a welcomed opportunity to stretch our legs. When we finally arrived in Copan, we were greeted by Flavia. Our bags were brought to Flavia's and we were able to eat, sightsee and shop around the little town. We would be staying at her two-room establishment which is comparable to a bed and breakfast, but really offers so much more.

Tuesday, June 3rd - The Mayan Ruins were on the agenda for today. We were driven to town and were paired up with an excellent guide, Jorge. Almost four hours were spent at the ruins and it still did not seem like enough time. Some of us chose to ride horses back to Flavia's while others rode in the truck. The rest of the afternoon and evening were spent relaxing in hammocks on the veranda, and just taking in all Mother Nature had to offer.

Wednesday, June 4th- After the long bus ride back to Tegucigalpa, we spent the night at Nancy's and began the chore of packing up all of our belongings and newly acquired treasures for the trip back home. It was a relaxing evening and we were all quite excited about the fact we would be back home in less than 24 hrs.

Thursday, June 5th- Our plane took us from Tegucigalpa to Miami and finally back to Chicago. We, as well as all of our luggage, made it home safely.
Meet the Faculty and Staff of Alison Bixby Stone School

Name: Nancy Chittenden Waldron; Married to Ray Waldron, has 3 sons, was raised in Costa Rica and England
College Education: Bachelors in Child Psychology-Costa Rica; Licensure in Child Development- Costa Rica; Certified Montessori Teacher- England; Lesley College, Boston, MA
Professional Background: Classroom Teacher, Educational Consultant, Manager of "Learning Corner", a clinic for children with learning difficulties.

How did you become principal of Alison Bixby Stone School? As a consultant, I was initially hired to revamp the curriculum and hire qualified teachers.
How do you feel about your staff? I have an excellent group of people. A dynamic force who make the mark on each child that comes through their classrooms.
What are your feelings about Honduras? Very positive! I love the people here, very family oriented, very positive, very supportive.
Any advice for teachers interested in teaching abroad? Do it! You will give to others and learn about yourself. A truly rewarding experience.
Name: Bonnie Alcantara
Age: 21
College Education: 4 year Pedagogy at U.N.A.H. (Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Honduras)
Length of time at Alison Bixby School: 1 year
What brought you to teach in Honduras? I'm from Honduras, but what brought me to teach is that I love kids and I love to be a part of whatever they will be in the future, to know that any small thing you do for them today will help them in the future.
What other situations have you taught in? Other schools and at home as a tutor of kids with different learning difficulties.
What do you like/dislike about Honduras? I love that Honduras is a small country and that some way or another you get to know a lot of people and they know people you know and then you end up knowing the same people and so on. I don't like to corruption that makes Honduras go backwards instead of forward everyday.
Any advice for teachers interested in teaching abroad? Every new experience is good if you're doing what you love to do, so if you enjoy teaching you'll love it anywhere you go. So the only advice is to be open about every culture that you go to and their traditions and learn new things everywhere you go.
Email: bonniealcantara@hotmail.com
Name: Julio Cesar Anariba
Age: 39
College Education: Major in Spanish and Literature (Middle School)
What brought you to teach in Honduras? An immense desire to transmit knowledge. What other situations have you taught in? Workshops in elementary schools; Spanish and spelling for teenagers. What do you like/dislike about Honduras? Dislike: Government corruption; Like: Aesthetic art- Sabilion, Arzo, Velasquez
Length of time at Alison Bixby Stone School: 2 years
Name: John Bishop
Age: 28

College Education: University of Georgia, Masters in Education; Middle School

What brought you to Honduras? The opportunity arose through my university professor.

What other situations have you taught in? Middle school Language Arts (6th grade) 8 weeks; Elementary school Science (2nd grade) 6 weeks as a volunteer

What do you like/dislike about Honduras? I dislike the fumes in traffic and the long bank lines. I do like the people, their soulfulness, the beauty in the landscapes, the fresh produce.

Length of time at Alison Bixby Stone School: 1 year

Any advice to teachers interested in teaching abroad? Do it!
Name: Megan Brum
Age: 23
College Education: Elementary Education major, Spanish minor
Length of time at Alison Bixby Stone School: 1 year
What brought you to teach in Honduras? I had been looking for a job in Central America and found this school through a teacher from last year who had graduated from my university.
What other situations have you taught in? Student teaching, day care.
What do you like/dislike about Honduras? I like the slow pace of life-although sometimes it's difficult to get things done because of this. I love the mountains, ocean, weather, outdoorsy feelings.
Any advice to teachers interested in teaching abroad? Be open-minded- the American way is not always the best way. Be a conscious traveler. Get to know the people.
Email: mmbrum2@yahoo.com
Name: Brian Churchwell
Age: 29
College Education: University of Northern Colorado/ BA Business Finance
What brought you to teach in Honduras? I love the Hispanic culture and working with children. Honduras was just the perfect fit.
What other situations have you taught in? Last year I volunteered full time in 2nd grade in Volusia County, Florida. Also, I've worked in summer camps helping children.
What do you like/dislike about Honduras? Everything about Honduras is wonderful! The people here are friendly and helpful. Also, the country is beautiful. There is so much to see.
Length of time at Alison Bixby Stone School: 1 year
Any advice to teachers interested in teaching abroad? Go with an open mind and realize ahead of time it's not the U.S.A. If you do that, it is amazing the things you will see and learn.
Email: bwchurchwell@hotmail.com
Name: Fanny Figueroa
Age: 32
College Education: Bachelor of Arts with a major in Psychology
Length of time teaching at Alison Bixby Stone School: 2 years

What are your likes/dislikes about Honduras? What I like about my country is the freedom we have to teach. The down part to it is that we don't have enough resources to work with.

Any advice for teachers wanting to teach abroad? I would encourage new teachers to travel and learn from other cultures.
Email: fespinal@zamorano.edu
Name: Lesby Antonia Zuniga Flores
Age: 29
College Education: Maestra de Educacion Primaria, pasante de la carrera de Ciencia de la Educacion (Elementary Education)
What brought you to teach in Honduras? I like to share knowledge that I possess with the rest of the children and primarily learn from them.
What other situations have you taught in? I taught religion and values classes to children and adults. I work in rural schools (preschool) and night school.
What do you like/dislike about Honduras? The people in Honduras are friendly and sincere. There are many beautiful places. I dislike the corruption, the government does not give support. There are no seminars for teachers. Rural schools have so many needs because everything is for private schools.
Length of time at Alison Bixby Stone School: 1 year
Any Advice for teachers interested in teaching abroad? DO IT! We can learn from others. Kids like to share as well.
Name: Shane Gaherty
Age: 29
College Education: University of Arkansas/Small Business Management-Entrepreneurship
Length of time at Alison Bixby School: 1 year
What brought you to teach in Honduras? I was intrigued by the opportunity to teach physical education and computers while experiencing a new culture. The opportunity to travel is also a bonus but the idea that I have a chance to do my part to help change the world is very gratifying.
What other situations have you taught in? This is my first classroom experience as my previous work experience was in the business world at home in Colorado. I was lucky enough to have indirect teaching experiences in those jobs while teaching computers and soccer to adults and children.
What do you like/dislike about Honduras? My dislikes are very limited. I have found the language barrier frustrating at times. While being able to get around town in Spanish, I've met people that I would really like to converse with about their experiences, lives, thoughts, etc. Unfortunately, as of now, I've been limited to a vague understanding of what they are saying. I have a lot of respect for Hondurans I know in the Zamorano region. There are so many respectable characteristics I can use to describe the Hondurans I've met such as: tenacious, innovative, caring, friendly, resourceful, ambitious, etc.
Do you have any advice for teachers wanting to teach abroad? Outside of the teaching experience, it is a great opportunity to expand your understanding of the world and why people think and act the way they do. Email: shane@whereyago.com
Name: Jennifer Lovejoy  
Age: 24  
College Education: B.S. Early Childhood Education (PreK-5)  
What brought you to teach in Honduras? I wanted to learn Spanish and travel a bit before grad school, family etc.  
What other situations have you taught in? I graduated in December 2000, so I taught 1st for 4 1/2 months in Alpharetta, GA. I've been teaching Kindergarten in Honduras for two years and am moving up to 1st grade in Honduras next year.  
What do you like/dislike about Honduras? Likes: Speaking Spanish, culture, dancing, scenery, cheap prices, traveling  
Dislikes: Corrupt government, the need to confirm everything, far away from family and friends.  
Any advice for teachers interested in teaching abroad? If you are interested, DO IT. Even if for one year, you will have an incredible experience. Also ship boxes early and confirm your plane tickets and VISA.  
Length of time at Alison Bixby Stone School: 2 years  
Email: amoralegria@yahoo.com
Name: Catherine Roback  
Age: 31  
College Education: James Madison University, Virginia, B.A. English/Early Childhood Education  
Length of time at Alison Bixby Stone School: 2 years  
What brought you to teach in Honduras? I got my job through an international teaching recruiting agency.  
What other situations have you taught in? I taught for 5 years in the Virginia Public Schools, then for 2 years in Egypt.  
What do you like/dislike about Honduras? I love the natural beauty of Honduras and the opportunities for outdoor activities like diving, hiking, white-water rafting, and kayaking. The people are very friendly as well. The poverty of the people is hard to live with at times - I wish I could do more to help.  
Any advice for teachers interested in teaching abroad? Be flexible, maintain a good sense of humor, and be ready for anything. It is a great experience that I wouldn't trade for the world. Use a recruiting agency such as ISS, Search Associates, and UNI.  
Email: catherineroback@yahoo.com
Name: Jose Eduardo Romero
Age: 28

College Education: Elementary School Music Education: Instrumentalist- violin specialty

What brought you to teach in Honduras? Being able to share knowledge with people who need it-especially kids-because they are the future of our country.

What other situations have you taught in? Other elementary schools and public preschools- low-income institutes.

What do you like/dislike about Honduras? I do not like the poverty that is in my country. I believe poverty exists because of the wrong decisions taken by the government.

Length of time at Alison Bixby Stone School: 2 years, 3 months

Any advice to teachers interested in teaching abroad? Demand from ourselves the 100% so that we will be able to give our best. Keep on learning about our degrees.
Name: Sara G. Soloizano
Age: 31
College Education: Licenciatura en Linguas Extranjeras; Major in English Teaching
What brought you to teach in Honduras? First of all it was the environment, then I loved the method they used for teaching English to children.
What do you like/dislike about Honduras? I like the freedom I have when teaching, though I don't like that sometimes teachers have a hard time with the lack of resources.
Any advice for teachers interested in teaching abroad? It's worthy to engage in the experience of teaching to people (children) from different backgrounds and cultures; also sharing their knowledge and expertise with other teachers.
Length of time at Alison Bixby Stone School: 7 years, 5 months
Email: sgsp72@yahoo.com
Name: Rachel Szlegier
Age: 30

College Education: University of Miami: B.A. in Child Psychology/Elementary Education, Ms. Ed. In Elementary Education
Length of time at Alison Bixby Stone School: 2 years; 1 year teaching in a 5/6 classroom, another year in 5/6/7 grades

What brought you to teach in Honduras?
I was tired of the bureaucracy, testing, politics, etc. of public education in the U.S. and was going to leave teaching altogether, but I didn't really want to go back to college and be trained in a different field. I have several friends who either attended international schools or have taught internationally and they encouraged me to look into it. I signed on with a couple of search companies (Search Associates and International School Services) and began searching different schools. I was amazed at the number and variety of opportunities. Among the schools that offered me a job, ABS stood out for several reasons. It was the only school that wasn't in a big city. It was also unique that its population wasn't strictly wealthy kids. Nancy's social mission really appealed to me. I had studied Spanish in school. Like warm weather and saw lots of opportunity for adventure in Central America, so here I am!

What other situations have you taught in?
I taught in the states for 8 years before coming here. I taught 4th grade on South Miami Beach in a school that was very mixed ethnically and socio-economically. I then taught 4th grade for 2 years in the inner city school in Daytona Beach. It was Title I school in a very poor, violent area. Although it was TOUGH, it was one of the highlights of my teaching career. From there,
I went on to join a team of teachers opening a multiage unit in a brand new school in upper class Ormand Beach, FL where I taught 1/2/3 combo for 1 year. Then I moved to St. Augustine and taught 3rd grade for 3 years. I team-taught with another teacher. We shared 2 classes of kids. She taught Language Arts while I taught math/science/social studies.

**What do like/dislike about Honduras?**

Likes: ABS- the simplicity, the freedom to teach how I believe, the STUDENTS' innocence, passion for learning, positive behavior, the setting, the materials available

Honduras- the simplicity, the people, the language, the opportunities to explore, the inexpensiveness of everything, my standard of living (much better than the U.S. financially), the mountains, the beauty, the rainforest, the islands, birds, safety, fresh fruits and veggies, all the funny quirky things like donkeys on the media on the city highway.

Dislikes: The food- ughh, grease, the health issues- parasites, fungus, fevers-yuck, the lack of live music-miss it, the lack of culture in general- Honduras functions to survive and doesn't care much for artsy stuff.

**Any advice to teachers interested in teaching abroad?**

If you are flexible, enjoy change, and can adapt to new things- GO FOR IT! It's the chance of a lifetime to experience new places, make some money, teach interesting kids. I recommend Search Associates [www.searchassociates.com](http://www.searchassociates.com), The International Educator [www.tieonline.com](http://www.tieonline.com), and International School Services [www.iss.edu](http://www.iss.edu), (pricier, but only represents quality schools). You do need to do your homework, find out as much as you can about the schools and talk, talk, talk, to people. There are awesome schools all over the world, but also some that stink. The more flexible you are about where you are willing to go, the better your chances of finding that perfect job for you.