

# Puerto Rico: Finding Home Far From Home



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Before arriving to Puerto Rico, I was very excited to explore another Spanish speaking culture, aside from my Mexican culture. Being in Puerto Rico really helped me see how the locals value their culture and how much they care for the island and its environment.

I was involved in a Puerto Rican Parrot project and a dam restoration project. I got to dissect red tailed boas that are invasive species in a reptile and amphibian lab. The goal of the red-tailed boa dissection was to investigate if the boas are preying on the endangered Puerto Rican Parrot. This work was done with the USFWS and local Department of Natural Resources.



Figure 1. Dissection of Red-tailed Boa at the Amphibian and Reptile Lab at UPR Mayaguez photo by Dr. Nicole.

We also removed washed in sediment from the dam that was blocking the flow of water. This is important as this water source feeds into state run fish hatcheries, and provides water to the Puerto Rican Parrot Recovery Program.



Figure 2. OSU CAMP students connecting with UPR CAMP Students photo by Clarisa. C



Figure 3. Outcome of Garden bed built at the Escuela Especialidad en Tecnología Gerardo Selles Sola.

Another project I was part of was a school project where we built a garden bed with an irrigation system for a school in Caguas called Escuela Especialidad en Tecnología Gerardo Sellés Solá. This was important for the students; providing opportunity to grow some vegetables for themselves and increasing food security following hurricanes and other natural disasters.

I interacted with students in the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) from University Interamericana de Puerto Rico (UPR) San German. This was a great part of the trip as we met students with a migrant background also persuing higher degrees including agriculture. We all had different stories to share and we were able to talk about our cultures and communities.



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