

# Andrea

## Canada

### 31 years old

- Programme Volunteer, Our Cabaña (2003)
- Action in the Community Participant, Sangam (2005)
- Independent Guest, Pax Lodge (2009)



My experience at the World Centres has connected me with a group of amazing individuals from around the world. The friendships forged at Our Cabaña are strong and we continue to get together years after. I have a different perspective on the world and my role in it because of my experiences. I am globally aware and conscious of the impact of the decisions I make on people around the world. I am passionate about international issues and work to instil this passion in the young women I work with today. Volunteering and visiting the World Centres helps you to see the potential we have as an organization; I believe we can make a difference in our world.

Leading program at a World Centre presents special challenges through language and culture. My experience there helped me to develop confidence in my leadership abilities, I use these leadership skills now as a leader and trainer. I also learned how to communicate with others who may not speak my language; at Sangam, we worked with a women's cooperative. I did not speak Hindi and therefore it was mostly non-verbal communication. At Our Cabaña, I had to communicate non-verbally with the children from Vamos that would come in for service project days. This taught me to be aware of how I communicate and to take into account the influences of our cultural diversity.

Visiting the World Centres has encouraged my interest in international Guiding. Since returning home, I have shared my international resources with girls of all ages, led training sessions for Leaders, been interviewed by local newspapers and given speeches about my experience at Guiding events. International Guiding and WAGGGS program initiatives are now my focus as a trainer. I attended the Western Hemisphere Conference in 2004 as a Young Adult Delegate and was on the planning committee for IMPACT 2007 (Ontario Guide Adventure - International Theme) which was run in conjunction with the 2007 Western Hemisphere Conference in Canada, incorporating WAGGGS themes into the event. This summer I will be facilitating sessions on MDG 6 HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases and the UN Right to Food at Guiding Mosaic International Camp here in Canada. I am now international adviser in my division.

I hope that I have increased awareness of International Guiding and have inspired some of my Guides to volunteer at the World Centres someday. I think that by promoting my experience at the World Centres outside of Guiding, I am helping to change the image of our organization. Most people are unaware that WAGGGS has ties to the UN and are impressed with the calibre of issues we discuss with our girls. I think that greater publicity of the diverse program that we offer would help to increase membership.