



Immersion in Seville's Local Community



Hello! My name is Victoria Gamarra and I am a junior at the University of Mount Saint Vincent majoring in Psychology and Spanish with a minor in Education. In the past 2 months in Spain with ICS, I have had a blast getting to know new people, having new experiences and learning a new culture. My involvement on a local soccer team and interning at a language exchange school has only added to the joy of studying abroad.



With my teammates of Azahara FC



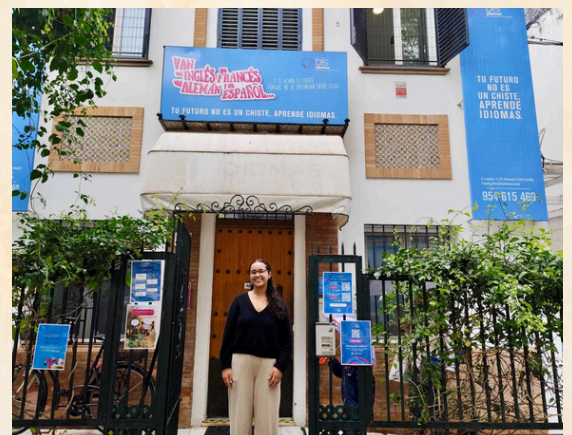
With team captain, Raquel



With Azahara FC coach, Michael

Soccer has been a cornerstone in my life for countless years, so it was a no-brainer for me to inquire about playing soccer in Seville. Before coming to Spain, I spoke with my college coach about my desire to play during my time abroad. Knowing everything was going to be new for me, it provided me a sense of comfort that I could still have the sport that has been my constant for years. In my first practice I was introduced to the team and they welcomed me right away. Being an outsider from not only the team but the country, everyone treated me with respect as a player of this beloved sport. From the start I could tell that they were a close knit team which reminded me of my team's dynamic. In attending practices I have learned a slightly new style of play and practice approach from what I know in the States. Despite all the cultural differences and language barrier that my Spanish teammates and I have, we share the common language of soccer which spans across culture.

At my internship at the BLS Language Exchange school, I substitute and assist teachers in helping students of all ages learn English. As an aspiring future educator, I knew that I could not pass up on a golden opportunity like working in a language exchange school during my time abroad. Every week I enhance my teaching skills and learn new ways of engaging the students in their language journey. It is amazing to witness the different



At the BLS Language Exchange school



Immersion in Seville's Local Community *Part II*



With teaching colleagues at BLS

stages of language development in each classroom which has provided me with a greater understanding of the language learning process. It has also opened up a new pathway in teaching for me that I now can consider as another possibility in my future. Ultimately, it has been such a joy collaborating with all the teachers and working with each child as they grow in their language skills each week.

From both of these amazing experiences, I have learned and grown in a multitude of areas. My communication skills in Spanish continue to advance as I learn new words and ways of living. While a language barrier continues to exist, having a positive attitude spans across languages. Connecting with the local community has shown me a side of Spain that I would not have been able to experience otherwise. Studying abroad has been a fantastic experience in itself, but with the immersion addition of playing on a local soccer team and interning at a language school, I have had a cultural fulfillment beyond my expectation.



Fully enjoying my immersion!



Kicking it with ICS student, Victoria Gamarra