Jessica Seline
Argentina

Life After Study Abroad
Since returning from studying abroad (in Argentina for an academic year), I finished my final year at the UW, then worked as a bilingual teaching assistant with AmeriCorps Schools of Hope. I am training to become a Child and Maternal Health Volunteer with the Peace Corps in Guatemala. I will be sworn in as a volunteer in December of this year (2014). [Jessica has since been sworn in as a PCV! You can follow along on her blog.]

Impact on Life, Goals & Career
Studying abroad in Argentina had a significant impact on my life, goals and career. I am certain that studying abroad for a year was the best preparation for becoming a Peace Corps Volunteer. Having already lived with a host family, I have been able to more easily adjust to being cared for and overfed by my host mom. Having gone through culture shock, I am now so much more patient with myself this time around. By becoming fluent in Spanish while studying abroad, I am more easily able to integrate into my community and focus on learning the technical aspects to my work, as well as feel more comfortable joking and talking with my host family at dinner. One of my fellow Peace Corps Trainees also studied abroad with me for the entire year. She is from another side of the country and I saw her for the first time since Argentina here in Guatemala. You never know how the connections you make while studying abroad will help you in the future!

A Favorite Memory from Abroad
My favorite memory from studying abroad was getting kicked out of an Argentine folklore class. I went with my best friends from Argentina and we were so bad at staying on the beat and following the instructor that she asked us to just watch. Both embarrassed and laughing so hard we were crying, we decided to stay for the open dance following the class. We ended up learning to dance folklore from a few locals and actually mastered the most basics steps!

Advice for Returning Students
Returning from studying abroad can be a really difficult time as you learn to readjust to life in the US. Try to be patient with yourself. Find clubs and activities you really love doing and get involved. Join internationally-focused groups, like BRIDGE. Think about going abroad again-and, of course, join the Peace Corps!!

Interview from November 2014