



Long Beach Unified School District  
**Lakewood High School**  
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WE  
339 Queen St East  
Toronto, ON  
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Dear WE Schools,

I was one of the privileged and honored teachers asked to attend Me to We Ecuador trip at the end of July 2018. To be honest, I didn't know what to expect except that I requested to attend one of these trips this year to Kenya. But instead I was asked to attend the Ecuador trip.

I don't even know how to begin to explain the trip. It was one of those trips that you will never forget. I travel somewhere every year and challenge myself to visit places far and wide. I have seen so many beautiful places, Ecuador is now one of them.

It was amazing to see and connect the WE Actions that we practice in my student club and coming to Ecuador made me aware how valuable these actions we do can make an impact. My students reside in middle and low income communities so we can only do so much fundraising, but we can gather and collect for food banks and blankets for the homeless shelters. My students understand the need because they, too, need those necessities themselves. When we do local actions, the students do feel that they make a difference and look forward to those small activities. The awesome part of these activities are hands on which makes it easily for students to get involved. There are also materials provided for free that the educators like myself can use when needed.

My students are in need themselves this is one of the many reasons why I still continue to help. My students love to help. The small impacts we make, makes a great difference. It stays with my students for a very long time that when they graduate from high school and in college, the students come back to help. I have been doing local activities for the past decade, that it has become customary that my students and colleagues ask when they can drop off cans, blankets, etc.

WE recognize those small gestures. I have been in other programs where they gladly take the money we donate and then send a generic letter in return. I like that WE personally check on you and tells you where the money is going, and celebrate your actions. That is why WE Day is so important to my student club. My students are empowered and when we were honored last year, it emphasized that hard work pays off. We can move mountains. The WE Day events change the way my students feel about themselves and for the better.

When in Ecuador, it was amazing to see how the pillars work first hand. I loved every minute of it. It was nice to see the impacts of ones doing and seeing how it is impacting a community far away from our own. It also makes you appreciate the moment, too. I was asked on the impact of this trip and I replied that I have a different perspectives on things. I can relate to this cultural aspect as I am indigenous myself and I went home appreciating that part of my life. I was not ashamed of my background, but felt honored that people wanted to know more about that part of my life. But honestly, it showed that we can truly make a difference no matter where you come from.

This trip not only showed the pillars, but it was educational. I have learned so much regarding Fair Trade, permaculture, sustainability, and the impacts of the donations we make. When I returned home, I shopped smarter and looked at food differently. I was changed for the better. The Me to We trips are

essential. Although I wish my students would understand the impact by attending these trips. They can see at first hand the changes they are providing through my experience. I, at least can provide that. I presented my trip to some of my colleagues and they, too, saw the impact it has had on me and the communities. The trip programs are planned well, where one can see where the WE pillars are implemented and to see the testimonials from the communities were insightful.

The WE program as a whole is awesome. I am honored that I am involved in such an organization where they are open-hearted and I can see changes for good. Coming from a community where my students reside and to be acknowledged for who we are, I appreciate dearly. I have been with this program for over 10 years now, I will continue to work with this organization until I retire.

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