Dear class of '55

Thank you for your support, helping me to participate in Cornell College’s program in Bolivia. It was an experience that helped me grow immensely. When I first arrived in Bolivia I was so overwhelmed by the chaos of cars and vendors that choke the streets of Cochabamba that I could hardly scrape together the voice and the Spanish words to buy a pen for class. When we went out anywhere I would cling desperately to the group, and when I was separated from the rest of the class on an excursion the first weekend it sent me into such a panic that I almost cried. By the end of my two months, my upper classmen Spanish major roommates were having me call their cabs and order their pizzas. I learned to walk around the streets on my own. I started to love the chaos. And if I got lost (and I did many times) I was confident that I could find my way back home.

The longer I stayed in Bolivia the more I found myself off the beaten track. Towards the end of the trip, I spent a few days with a friend traveling away from the group. I found that at some point, I stopped needing the group to make me feel safe, and I became Ok on my own. Suddenly a whole world of opportunities opened up before me. After all, one can go many more places when one is willing to go it alone. That program I’d read about to study Mayan in Guatemala for a month? Why not? Actually, make it two months. One might not be enough time for wandering off on my own. The world is at my fingertips, and I have you to thank for that.

Sincerely,

Katy Dye