

Sarah deLiefde - Guatemala

Sarah was awarded a Walker Fellowship to pursue a microfinance internship with the NGO Friendship Bridge in Panajachel, Guatemala during January 2007. Friendship Bridge provides small loans to impoverished Mayan women throughout Guatemala. Sarah acted as an interpreter for prospective U.S. donors visiting Guatemala and traveled to various communities to meet the organization's clients. Sarah assisted the NGO staff in preparing for a market study on geographic expansion and then traveled to the el Quiche department to assist the staff in conducting the study. Upon returning, Sarah worked on creating a training manual for the Guatemalan loan advisors. Sarah was able to gain a solid understanding of Guatemalan culture, issues confronting Mayan women in Guatemala, and learned a significant amount on functioning of a microfinance organization. Sarah returned two years later to work for Friendship Bridge in their U.S. office. The experience also sparked her interest in the impact of violence on Maya women, which led to a senior honors thesis.



Sarah with her host family