

LETTER FROM JULY 2010 STUDENT: Michelle Pienknagura, U Arizona

Hello, Dr. Hammer! This semester I enrolled in a medical anthropology class and have never been more excited about anthropology. Today in class we had to talk about previous experiences we've had with non-Western medicine. When I was called upon, I began talking of the curanderos, Don Poncho, and the numerous traditional healing remedies I learned about and experienced first-hand in the Andes. I spoke of cuy, boa fat, teas, and even the shot of pisco I took to increase my body temperature the night after we returned from Llanganuco. My professor kept asking about the use of the cuy and my part in Tim's curing ritual where I had to take the cuy to the crossroads and call the spirits. It was so difficult for me to hold back from speaking of my experiences, because everything I have learned from the fieldschool was so relevant to our discussion.

This semester I am doing an independent study with a cultural anthropology professor and focusing my paper on my topic of the disappearance of traditional clothing and consequences to social relationships. Also, in my medical anthropology class I am writing my final term paper on Tim's curandero experience and the cultural significance of the cuy in Andean medicine. I am so glad I will be able to apply my studies and experiences in the Andes to my classes here at the U of A.

I wanted to thank you again, so much, for the opportunity to live with the people and learn of the culture in Carhuaz. I love going to my anthropology classes and relating my first-hand experience to my studies here at home. I am thrilled whenever I am able to offer insight or examples from Peru in discussions in my medical anthropology class. A student came up to me after class today and asked me if I did my fieldschool with the Center for Social Well-being, because she has been interested in attending in the future. I told her just a few of my experiences and she said she will definitely look into it for next summer.

Regards to you and Pocha,
Michelle Pienknagura