



of Carpinteria

NEWS

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Girls Inc. of Carpinteria Alumna and National Scholar Andrea Delgado Takes ‘Strong, Smart, and Bold’ Experience Abroad

Harvard pre-med student gains first-hand healthcare experience in Latin America

CARPINTERIA, CA, August 23, 2016 — Andrea Delgado of Carpinteria joined [Girls Inc. of Carpinteria](#) when she was just five years old, attending the nonprofit’s After-School Enrichment and Summer Camp programs. Now, the 21-year-old is entering her senior year at [Harvard College](#) and building on the passion she developed in science and math as a young girl.

Delgado recently returned from Santiago, Chile where she spent eight weeks shadowing doctors, residents and medical students, observing surgeries, volunteering in the local community, and learning about Chile’s health system and culture. The trip was part of the [Health and Spanish Immersion \(HSI\) Program](#) at Harvard, designed to offer pre-med students with an incredible array of opportunities to learn first-hand about medicine and public health in and around Santiago.

Delgado credits Girls Inc.’s programming with boosting her self-confidence, goal setting skills, physical fitness and mental strength to help her get where she is today.

Girls Inc.’s mission is to empower and inspire all girls to be strong, smart, and bold.

Delgado was an active member at Girls Inc. from kindergarten through high school and served as a volunteer in its programs. In her junior year, she was selected as a 2012 [Girls Inc. National Scholar](#) and the recipient of a \$15,000 scholarship for college.

She is currently working toward her bachelor’s degree in history and science with a minor in psychology at Harvard College.

“My interest in and confidence to pursue science and math started at Girls Inc. with the SMART (Science, Math, and Relevant Technology) Program when I was in elementary school,” said Delgado. “From a young age, I learned to be confident in trying new things and participating in traditionally ‘male’ subjects. The confidence I built helped in the years to follow and allowed me to not shy away from honors and advanced math and science classes.”

Delgado says Girls Inc. also prepared her to feel safe being away from home. As young as third grade, she took part in camping trips and traveled to Atlanta with the organization.

“These activities helped give me a sense of autonomy so that later in middle and high school, I felt totally comfortable navigating new experiences away from my family and was excited rather than nervous,” she said.

Little did she know that those first camping trips away from home with Girls Inc. were a stepping stone to traveling around the world.

During her time in Santiago this summer, Delgado sat in on primary care appointments, examined patients, scrubbed in to observe surgeries, and performed rural home visits. She also did community service at [Teletón](#), an organization that began in Chile to provide physical therapy to children with neuromuscular deficits.

“I learned the career of a doctor varies a lot depending on whether you work in a clinic or hospital setting and the resources available at your place of work,” said Delgado. “I realized I value connecting with people and being in a position where I can utilize and communicate my knowledge to help someone else, so I now plan to pursue a primary care position, possibly an obstetrician.”

She says the most interesting part of the experience was learning how Chile manages a public healthcare system, where everyone has access to government-sponsored healthcare.

“Growing up in the United States, I had heard about a one-payer health system and read about it, but never lived it. I learned it has both benefits and drawbacks,” said Delgado. “I think being in that environment was invaluable to me as a future doctor and voter.”

While she called Santiago “a big adjustment” for someone from Carpinteria and Cambridge, Delgado said she learned a lot and is grateful for the experiences she has had over the years.

“Overall, I feel Girls Inc. helps girls find themselves through the pillars of ‘strong, smart, and bold’ so that they have that sense of autonomy, but also know they can rely on a support network of other women,” she said.

For more information about Girls Inc. of Carpinteria, visit www.girlsinc-carp.org or call 805-684-6364.

Girls Inc. of Carpinteria is a member of Girls Incorporated®, a nonprofit organization that inspires all girls to be strong, smart, and bold. With local roots dating to 1864 and national status since 1945, Girls Inc. has responded to the changing needs of girls through research-based programs and public education efforts that empower girls to understand, value, and assert their rights. We provide programs for girls 6 to 18 years old that focus on science, math, and technology; health and sexuality; economic and financial literacy; sports skills; leadership and advocacy; and media literacy. To learn more, become a volunteer or offer support, please visit www.girlsinc-carp.org/.

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