

Sunday:

Arrive in Belo Horizonte and were greeted by Jose and made our way along a curvaceous road to Lavras. In Lavras, we were brought to an AMAZING house/farm where the food is absolutely amazing. Everything is made fresh. Some of the best tasting food I have ever eaten.

Lance and I were brought to a local soccer match where Joao, from previous Denver trip, was playing. It was amazing to see the local soccer talent. Lance and I were invited to join the team afterwards for a beer, which continued into more than one! I found it incredibly interesting that, instead of buying a pitcher, they buy a beer, very much like a 40oz., and share it amongst everyone. We have little cups and drink cervezinhos (little beers). Unlike the Americans that like to chug, and main goal is to become inebriated, they sit, talk and enjoy their beers amongst friends. After watching the Flamengo match at the cantina, we then went back to Jose's house where a roda da samba group played samba music in a circle and we ate paodequeziou, drank beer, and talked with the local Tennis club teachers. It was amazing music and an incredible experience.



Me next to a cow at a little rest stop. People will milk the cow for fresh milk.



Jose's farm.



Sunset in Lavras.



Picture with Joao's local soccer team. They gave us a jersey that night!



The Roda Da Samba group.

Monday:

Woke up and had an amazing breakfast. The best tasting fruit I will ever eat...mostly grown and harvested in Jose's orchard. The papaya was amazing. Pao de quezo with a berry preserve(made by his mother) is absolutely amazing.

Visited the Tennis Club and learned about how they implement their sports program. There are 3 levels...4-5 year olds, 6-7, and 8-9 year olds. Students are introduced to a variety of sports at a non-competitive level. Students at around 9 then choose a sport to play at a more competitive level. The coaches all have degrees in Physical Education from the University. They find that this approach keeps the students from "burning out" at an early age in their sport of choice. I find it interesting that sport at the University level is NOT competitive. Students that may have talent may end up dropping out of their sport because there is no incentive for them to continue at a higher level. Very different than in the United States. We then continued on a tour of the club and watched Joao coach a Futsal practice. The boys were 7 and 8 years old and very talented. We were introduced to the students and mothers. And amazingly, the Brazilians encounter "soccer mom's" as well!

We then went to the UFLA stadium to meet Prof. Fernando and see his Track and Field program. I find it amazing that none of the schools have sports programs in their schools. These students are picked up from their schools by a bus and taken to this sports center, focused on at-risk youth. Many come from extremely poor environments. This program is funded by the many of the professors at UFLA and receive very little money from the government. Like America, they have a "welfare" system for their poor, but it is not regulated. If the parents are drug or alcohol users, they will spend the money on those things and not their family. Also, many of the kids have been rescued from child labor situations in the city. Unfortunately, Fernando struggles with up-to-date equipment....pole vaults made out of bamboo for example. I would love to find an organization that is ready to get rid of their old equipment to donate to their program....even our "old" equipment would be better than their bamboo poles!!! This program does not have any focus on education or helping them with their studies. I asked if there are any tutors that help the kids with their homework and there are none. The main focus is on their health and giving them an opportunity to excel in something.

We then went on a tour of the Instituto Presbiteriano Gammon, founded by the Presbyterian missionaries, the Gammon Family. It is a private school, grades K-12 and they also use the facilities for a private university to educate Physical Education teachers. It is a beautiful campus. They have an art program as well....and I find it interesting that they have sports activities in this private sector. One activity is aerobic dance. The team is internationally ranked and will be traveling to Las Vegas for an international competition in the next few weeks. Later on that evening I presented the SCORES program to Physical Education students. I found it interesting that they really didn't have any questions in regards to women/girls playing soccer. Women in soccer isn't really promoted here and isn't something that they hold in importance. Students were surprised

to hear that the United States has poor...many assume that everyone has money here and that we don't have a problem with poverty or at-risk youth.



Joao's Futsal Team and their mom's.



View of Lavras from the Tennis Club.



Lavras town center.



These children are rescued from child labor and involved in the track and field program.



Their bamboo javelin.



Gammon's trophies.



Students preparing for their Anniversary celebration at Gammon.

Tuesday:

Visited the Associacao Olimpica de Lavras. I was incredibly impressed with the program here. They provide assistance to children that cannot afford to pay for the program and they provide a bus to pick up the children. Here, I saw one girl playing futebol with the boys. This program also encourages the students to have good grades in school and provide "tutors" to help them with their homework.

We then went down the street to visit CNEC and was incredibly impressed with Capitão...he is 84 years old and built the school by hand. He has coached and played at the professional level and has designed this school with education and sports in mind. It is linked together. This school reinstated their female Futsal program because we, the Americans, were coming to visit. They want to continue their program into the future. I think it would be WISE, and BENEFICIAL, to sit down with the Partners Program, to further develop our relations with the school/sports programs. I think it would be extremely beneficial to strengthen our ties and help these student athletes obtain sports scholarships to American Universities. We need to possibly expand our partnerships to University coaches in the state of Colorado, like Regis University. These students, ESPECIALLY the girls, would benefit the most from this kind of partnership.

We then went to SELT- City of Lavras Sports Bureau to visit with Jose Oscar to see the great things the government is doing to improve the recreational sports for the youth, elderly, and disabled. There is a push to restore the nature trails in the country and they are now funding projects to maintain the trails and take people into see the natural wonders of Brazil. Here we were able to see their Sensory Garden. One of the first of it's kind in Brazil, designed by Jose's daughter when she was going to school for her degree in landscape architecture. It is extremely beneficial to the people that are physically or mentally challenged. In America we have the Americans with Disabilities Act that forces engineers to redesign and design buildings and cities to accommodate people with disabilities. In Brazil, they do not have that, but, there is a movement now, by those with disabilities, to force this to happen. Many "new" engineering schools are forcing their graduates to spend a day in a wheelchair to create empathy for those that have a disability, so that when they design things, they can make accommodations for these people. We were also able to visit an art classroom. The students were the same age as the ones that I have in CO. They were so excited to hear English and kept asking us to say their name in English. Many of the art produced is similar to that in my school...very amazing!

We were not able to visit the Equestrian Therapy Unit...not enough time.

We did a little shopping and then played soccer at the Lavras Tennis Club. I am the first girl EVER to play with the boys at the club...an amazing experience and I was able to prove myself by scoring 3 goals...a record for the Tennis Club by a girl!!! Jose said that it will probably never be broken because, most likely, there will never be another girl playing there with them again. It is very different than the US, where coed soccer is commonplace. It was fun and I have made life long friends. I hope to return to further

expand our bridge, our hopes and goals for the future of sports and education in Lavras. I am very sad to go.



Associacao Olimpica de Lavras



Associacao Olimpica de Lavras



The only girl training at the Associacao Olimpica de Lavras.



The reinstated girls Futsal team at CNEC.



At a presentation at CNEC.



Two of the girls from CNEC.



CNEC



With Jose Oscar at SELT.



The art room at SELT.



The cook at Jose's farm!



Me with Joao's Futsal team after playing with the boys!



At the Pizzaria with the coaches of Lavras.

Wednesday:

Left Lavras....very sad. We met Janaina today and are staying at a Hotel in Betim. Very nice place. She took us to Rancho Alegre, a churrasco, to eat lunch and then we stopped by the local TV station to meet Vito, the sports broadcaster that will be interviewing us today. He has played professional soccer in Brazil and in Europe and Vancouver.

The TV interview went very well. I mentioned that we want to help improve the futebol femenina here in Brazil....level the playing field with the US and it created a lot of conversation. Here, women's soccer/Futsal, is not of importance. The newsmen agreed and said that they wanted to talk more to us at a later time off the camera, when there isn't a limit. This has been a highly successful trip so far.



Eating at the churrasco,  
Rancho Alegre.



Rancho Alegre.



At the Betim TV station  
with Vito, the sports  
reporter.



We randomly stopped  
by a school to see the  
kids practice for Festa  
Junina.



Eating pizza at the mall  
after the TV interview.



An unfortunate site in  
Brazil....



Thursday:

We weren't quite sure what the exact plan was for us this morning when we went to Janaina's school. We ended up speaking to the high school students about our reasons for being here. We also stopped by a local Recreation center. We saw a program for at risk youth run by the fire department.

Then we went to the Mercado in Belo Horizonte and to Minerao Stadium and Sao Francisco church.

Later on that evening we went to see a boys Futsal match. Betim won.



Some girls from the high school.



Youth apart of the Fire Department program.



In front of a soccer field in Betim.



In front of a flower stand at the Mercado.



At Minerao Stadium.



Sao Francisco Church, built by Oscar Niemeyer.



McDonald's in Brazil.



At the Futsal court in Betim.



With the Betim team that won.



With the officials.

Friday:

Went to Helena Antipoff stadium. Janaina talked about her program for girls that suffer from sexual abuse. I talked about Denver SCORES and showed the slide show along with the National program's video. Lance talked about his program. We then answered questions from the students.

Then we went to watch the kids play a pick up game of soccer. Lance went to play with them.

Tonight we are going to watch a girls Futsal clinic. We THOUGHT we were watching a training session with the girls, but were misinformed...we were PLAYING with the girls. Which, really made me nervous to play on concrete, especially since I am just a year out of ACL surgery...I didn't play too hard.

We then went around Belo Horizonte at night.



With a Military Policeman that was staying at our Hotel.



With Luzia outside of Helena Antipoff.



At Helena Antipoff.



Helena Antipoff Auditorium.



With the kids from the HS after they played.



With the Futsal Girls.



Rastaman on the street in Belo...I bought a necklace from him!



Not sure where in Belo Horizonte.



Sao Jose Church in Belo Horizonte.



In front of Ciladentes' statue.



Belo Horizonte at night.

Saturday:

Went to the outdoor market in Belo Horizonte and walked around and shopped.

We then went to see Amputee soccer. I was absolutely amazed. These players have not given up on life and continued to play soccer. It really humbles you and makes you appreciate the things that you have in your life. We discussed the rights of people that have disabilities. They are starting to make waves with their rights. They do not have a Disabilities Act in place at the moment...hopefully in the future so that they will be treated as equals.

Later on that evening we went to see Cruzeiro and Avaio play at Mineirão Stadium. Cruzeiro won 1-0. It was a great game!



At a fruit market in the morning.



Outside the Galo store.



Betim Cultural House.



At the Cultural house.



At the outside market in Belo.....Michael Jackson impersonator.



Amputee soccer.



With the Amputee soccer team and coaches.



Belo Horizonte.



At Mineirão soccer stadium watching the Cruzeiro match.



With Cruzeiro fans.

Sunday:

Visited Instituto Inhotim...a Botanical garden and contemporary art museum. It was a beautiful area and interesting art exhibits. I find contemporary art interesting while the others really didn't get it. I find that many times, the artists are expressing their voice and others in result of particular events that occur in society...like uprisings against oppressive governments, etc. I enjoyed it.

Later on, we watched the USA vs. Brazil game...USA lost...=(



On a bench at Inhotim.



The path at Inhotim.



Adriana and I at Inhotim.



Another bench.



A sculpture at Inhotim.



A bouquet at Inhotim.



A Snake Sculpture at Inhotim.



Me along the path at Inhotim.



In front of some crazy foliage at Inhotim.





Beautiful scenery at Inhotim.



A modern art installation. It reminded me of Mondrian painting.



Me inside!



A mural at Inhotim.



I am holding up the bus mural!



Watching the US/Brazil match.



1<sup>st</sup> half results...then Brazil turned it on.

Monday:

We went to Juatuba to talk to the PE teachers there. We were interviewed by the local TV station as well. Here, I presented the Denver SCORES program and Lance talked about his soccer program. Janaina also presented her program for girls that suffer from sexual abuse. We talked about the similarities and differences between Brazil and the US. We struggle with the same issues....poverty, gangs, drug abuse, teen pregnancy...and talked about how we can work together to tackle these problems.

Later that night we met with the local Partners chapter and discussed future visits, one upcoming to the US by Adriana.



Teachers of Juatuba.



A Brazilian taxi.



Very socialist! The sculpture at our hotel.



At our hotel.



Another shot at our hotel.



The entrance to our hotel.



Betim.



A normal occurrence....graffiti is everywhere.



Betim.





Artwork at the Belo Horizonte airport.



Tuesday:  
We go home!

This has been such a life-changing experience for me. I am honored that I was chosen to represent the US and the program that I coach for, Denver SCORES, in Brazil. I have met amazing people, people that will be my life long friends. I am inspired to do more, both at home in the US and internationally with at risk youth, especially the girls. I think it is extremely VITAL to help girls at a young age in at risk environments...where no one is there telling them that they are worth anything. Girls are extremely vulnerable to societal pressures. In Brazil, boys when they are born are given soccer balls and girls are given dolls and little kitchens. I believe that sports, connected with education, can help girls rise above their "societal norms." Sports give girls skills that they can use both on and off the field. Sports can build up their self-esteem, their self-worth, provide them the skills to communicate, show them to not look at other girls as the enemy, but as a teammate, give them the strength to persevere and not give up. These skills they can use in their education and in the business world. These skills can give them the power to not settle and to follow their dreams. And, at the same time, they have a coach, someone in their life, telling them that "they can," when everyone else is telling them they cannot. I am absolutely inspired to continue to work with at-risk youth, especially the girls. I am looking forward to the next Partners meeting to discuss what to do next with the coaching coaches program. I am looking forward to sharing my experience with my school and others throughout the community!