

*It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it.  
And it isn't enough to believe in it.  
One must work at it.  
— Eleanor Roosevelt*

Greetings from Buenos Aires! The time has been flying fast and we are nearing the end of winter here in the Southern Hemisphere. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you a little bit of my experiences here as a Rotary World Peace Fellow.

### **Academic Progress:**

Presently, the second trimester of the Master's program in International Relations is coming to a close. Once again, I was very impressed with my classes. I enjoyed the variety of subject matter: Debates and Trajectories of International Law, Models and Processes of Development in America Latina, International Political Economy, and Theory and Practice of International Negotiation.

The course on international law presented an introduction to the concepts and institutions of Public International Law. It familiarized us with the principles of the international responsibilities of states and the mechanisms for conflict resolution in all of the areas regulated by international law. It also deliberated the effectiveness and utility of international law as a system for regulating the actions of states, international organizations and individuals.

Models and Processes of Development in America Latina focused on the debate among experts over strategies for development in Latin America. It offered tools, concepts and methodology to analyze the difficulties in development in the region and specifically in Argentina. It also applied the diverse approaches to concrete problems, centering on the relationship between structure, institutions, and action in a determined historical setting. The class shared an integrated vision of the way in which the economy, politics, and society interact in particular historical processes of development.

In the course on International Political Economy, we focused on the behavior of the market, the state, and institutions, and the interaction between them at the domestic and international level. In class discussions, we explored the main theoretical perspectives and debates on the subject. We analyzed the principle problems of the subject area, focusing on gaining an understanding of the particular mechanisms of the global markets and their expression in international politics.

The course on international negotiations was an intensive graduate seminar designed to introduce the theory and practice of international negotiations. In the first part of the course, we studied the conceptual framework for the study of international



Students gather around the negotiating table in a simulation of Middle East peace talks

negotiations, including its different definitions, mediation and diplomatic intervention, cooperation and conflict, reciprocity, and peaceful change. In the second part, we examined the practice of international negotiations in the context of Latin America and



Bargaining "under the table" as the peace talks stall

the Middle East, with emphasis upon the peaceful settlement of international conflicts. The professor, an Argentinean who lives and works in Israel, shared his vast understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with us. In the last session, we participated

in a simulation of a Middle East International Conference. In the simulation, we experienced first-hand the difficulties and complexities of multilateral negotiations.

### **Rotary Activities:**

Recently, I spoke to four Rotary clubs of Moreno with another World Peace Fellow from Italy. The meetings were open to Rotarians from the district and also the community. The main purpose was for us to share our experiences, what motivated us to become World Peace Fellows, our expectations for the program, and how we plan to apply what we are learning in the Master's program in our future careers. The Rotarians were also interested in becoming more familiar with the Rotary World Peace Fellowship in order to be able to promote the program in their own communities. For many, it was the first time



they had met a World Peace fellow and it was an opportunity for us to explain a little more about the program. The idea was for us to motivate them to find young professionals to apply for the World Peace Fellowship. Also, the Rotarians wanted us to have the opportunity to meet them and learn about the projects they are developing. They also held their normal activities so that we could experience what they do each week at their Rotary club meetings.

I also had the opportunity to participate in a Workshop on Conflict Resolution with the Rotaract of Recoleta. The workshop began with two lectures. The first was an introduction to conflict resolution that offered important tools in order to be able to

hold a debate about current conflicts and the most appropriate forms of resolving them. The second lecture was on experiences and examples of current conflicts. It gave a brief history of the evolution of various modern conflicts. The main goal of the workshop was to provide an enjoyable learning experience for people with a varied level of experience with the subject. Once the lectures were over, there was time for round-table discussions about the information that had been presented. I was able to help as a facilitator of one of the discussions. The Rotaract workshop was a very enjoyable and informative event!

### **Volunteer Activities:**

I have begun volunteering as a mentor for children in a shantytown called Zavaleta on the outskirts of Buenos Aires. Words really are not adequate to describe the place. Even though I have lived in some really poor places, it is still shocking for me to enter into the neighborhood. One after the other, for as far as you can see, there are shacks precariously constructed with scraps of metal and plywood. The kids seem to be desperate for affection and some of the other volunteers have told me that many are abused. One day, we had a speaker on drug abuse prevention come and talk with us. Zavaleta has a serious drug problem and is known in Buenos Aires as the place to go to buy drugs. The children we work with are exposed to drugs at an early age. But drugs are not the only problem these kids face, health is another serious issue. Many conditions the children have go untreated—either for lack of attention or lack of resources. For example, a small cut that a little five-year old girl had on her hand became seriously infected. It is difficult to imagine how children grow up in such conditions.