Whole Planet Foundation® (WPF) funds microlending programs in Costa Rica where EARTH University grows Whole Trade® bananas which are sold in Whole Foods Market® (WFM) stores. WPF is a WFM non-profit whose mission is to alleviate poverty by funding microlending programs where WFM sources products as a way to alleviate poverty and give back to our global communities.

Through the WFM Team Member Volunteer Program, WFM gives Team Members the unique opportunity to travel abroad with WPF to learn about WPF and meet microcredit clients, see where and how WFM products are grown, provide community service, experience and learn from other cultures, and challenge themselves by exploring exciting countries around the globe.
TRIPS 1 AND 2

WFM TEAM MEMBER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM
TRAVEL IN COSTA RICA

WFM SUPPLIER PARTNER CORSICANA
WHOLE TRADE® PINEAPPLES
IN LA VIRGEN

REST AND RELAXATION ON THE
PACIFIC AT THE END OF THE TMVP

WFM SUPPLIER PARTNER NEW CHAPTER’S
FINCA LUNA NUEVA IN CHACAGUA

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT WITH WFM SUPPLIER PARTNER
EARTH UNIVERSITY AND VISIT WITH WPF MICROLENDING PARTNER
ASOCIACIÓN COSTA RICA Grameen
IN GUÁCIMO
In 2015, 28 WFM Team Member Volunteers traveled to Costa Rica to volunteer in La Argentina, a community near EARTH University, where WFM sources Whole Trade® bananas and pineapples. The first group of 14 Team Members resurfaced and beatified a sports and exercise court to create a new sports area at El Camarón Elementary School in Santa Rosa of Guácimo to promote the practice of sports and exercise for children. They visited with microcredit clients of WPF partner Asociación Costa Rica Grameen and learned about the Whole Trade® bananas grown at EARTH University which are sold in WFM stores. They also visited New Chapter’s original biodynamic farm where they learned about the properties of many medicinal plants and about biodynamic farming. Team Members took Spanish lessons and learned about Costa Rican culture, food, traditions and dance.

TEAM 1

*June 15 - June 30, 2015*

Alicia Fox (Northern California Region, The Alameda Store)
Breanna McDaniels (Florida Region, Wellington Store)
Chelsea Archer (Southwest Region, Arbor Trails Store)
Emily Earnest (North Atlantic Region, North Atlantic Distribution Center)
Helen Lee (Pacific Northwest Region, Laurelhurst Store)
Jennifer Lahotski (Southern Pacific Region, La Jolla Store)
Jose Rodriguez (Southwest Region, Bellaire Store)
Leslie Ireland (Global Office)
Lindsay Halsch (Rocky Mountain Region, Belmar Store)
Luis Ibarra (Northern California Region, The Alameda Store)
Maria Calvillo (Southern Pacific Region, La Jolla Store)
Maria Barajas (Northern California Region, Walnut Creek Store)
Bob Hufsmith (Pacific Northwest Region, Cambie Store)
Wilber Quinteros (Mid-Atlantic Region, Rockville Store)

GROUP COORDINATOR
Chris Picado

COSTA RICA GUIDES
Mario Davis
Victor Rodriguez

PROJECT COORDINATOR
Chris Picado

WFM TEAM MEMBER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MANAGER
Genie Bolduc
2015 COSTA RICA TRIP 1 ITINERARY
JUNE 15 - 30, 2015

TRIP 1 ITINERARY- 2 WEEKS

Day 1 Monday, June 15 - Arrive and transfer to EARTH University in Guácimo
Day 2 Tuesday, June 16 - Waste management, organic and integrated farm tours with EARTH
Day 3 Wednesday, June 17 - Learn about Whole Trade banana production, EARTH student entrepreneurs and Spanish language
Day 4 Thursday, June 18 - Visit and learn about Asociación Costa Rica Grameen and visit ACRG client agricultural projects
Day 5 Friday, June 19 - Visit ACRG client cheese producer in Turrialba and participate in celebration at EARTH University
Day 6 Saturday, June 20 - Homestay and community service in La Argentina
Day 7 Sunday, June 21 - Homestay and community service in La Argentina
Day 8 Monday, June 22 - Homestay and community service in La Argentina
Day 9 Tuesday, June 23 - Homestay and community service in La Argentina
Day 10 Wednesday, June 24 - Homestay and community service in La Argentina
Day 11 Thursday, June 25 - Visit New Chapter’s original farm at Finca Luna Nueva Lodge with night walk in forest
Day 12 Friday, June 26 - Learn about cacao and biodynamic and organic agriculture as well as medicinal plants
Day 13 Saturday, June 27 - Head to beach hotel
Day 14 Sunday, June 28 - Day at the beach
Day 15 Monday, June 29 - Day at the beach, leave for San Jose and typical Costa Rican dinner
Day 16 Tuesday, June 30 - Depart for home
In 2015, 28 WFM Team Member Volunteers traveled to Costa Rica to volunteer in La Argentina, a community near EARTH University, where WFM sources Whole Trade® bananas and pineapples. The second group of 14 Team Members repaired Scout House for troop 343, cleaning, sanding, painting and replacing the roof. They visited with 15 microcredit clients of WPF partner Asociación Costa Rica Grameen and learned about the Whole Trade® bananas grown at EARTH University which are sold in WFM stores. They also visited New Chapter’s original biodynamic farm and Corsicana pineapple farm, where Whole Trade® pineapples are grown that are for sale in WFM stores. Team Members took Spanish lessons and learned about Costa Rican culture, food, traditions and dance.

TEAM 2
August 3 - 18, 2015
Ashley DeGroot (Rocky Mountain Region, Bradburn Store)
Bridget Munro (Pacific Northwest Region, Cambie Store)
Christian Pirtle (Southwest Region, Southwest Regional Support Office)
Cierra Xavier (Southern Pacific Region, Long Beach Store)
Devon Hall (Northeast Region, Upper West Side Store 97th Street)
Kelly Duff (Florida Region, Pinecrest Store)
Laura Bowman (Mid-Atlantic Region, Devon Store)
Lisa Wagner Hocking (South Region, McEwen Store)
Mandy Marino (Global Office)
Mary Pat Boron (Northeast Region, Ridgewood Store)
Sara Fulton-Koerbling (Southwest Region, Bowman Store)
Tiffany Ingle (United Kingdom, Richmond Store)
Will Hildeburn (Pacific Northwest Region, Bridgeport Store)
Cesar Zapata (North Atlantic Region, North Atlantic Distribution Center)

GROUP COORDINATOR
Chris Picado

COSTA RICA GUIDES
Victor Albarca
Victor Rodriguez

PROJECT COORDINATOR
Chris Picado

WFM TEAM MEMBER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MANAGER
Genie Bolduc
2015 COSTA RICA TRIP 2 ITINERARY
AUGUST 3 - 18, 2015

TRIP 1 ITINERARY - 2 WEEKS

Day 1 Monday, August 3 - Arrive and transfer to EARTH University in Guácimo
Day 2 Tuesday, August 4 - Waste management, organic and integrated farm tours with EARTH
Day 3 Wednesday, August 5 - Learn about Whole Trade banana production, EARTH student entrepreneurs and Spanish language
Day 4 Thursday, August 6 - Visit and learn about Asociación Costa Rica Grameen and visit ACRG client agricultural projects
Day 5 Friday, August 7 - Visit ACRG client cheese producer in Turrialba and participate in celebration at EARTH University
Day 6 Saturday, August 8 - Homestay and community service in La Argentina
Day 7 Sunday, August 9 - Homestay and community service in La Argentina
Day 8 Monday, August 10 - Homestay and community service in La Argentina
Day 9 Tuesday, August 11 - Homestay and community service in La Argentina
Day 10 Wednesday, August 12 - Homestay and community service in La Argentina
Day 11 Thursday, August 13 - Visit New Chapter’s original farm at Finca Luna Nueva Lodge with night walk in forest
Day 12 Friday, August 14 - Learn about cacao and biodynamic and organic agriculture as well as medicinal plants
Day 13 Saturday, August 15 - Head to beach hotel
Day 14 Sunday, August 16 - Day at the beach
Day 15 Monday, August 17 - Day at the beach, leave for San Jose and typical Costa Rican dinner
Day 16 Tuesday, August 18 - Depart for home
Meeting microcredit clients of WPF microlending partner Asociación Costa Rica Grameen

THE EXPERIENCE

Learning about sustainable gardening
Playing in the abundant water
Working hard to create a new sports area

Hanging out at EARTH University
Learning about Whole Trade bananas
Playing sports with local children
Team Members were treated to all sorts of fresh fruits including bananas, coconut, breadfruit, pineapples, rambutan and the list goes on. TM Volunteer Tiffany celebrated her birthday with the best vegan cake EVER! Their home stay families prepared many of the local specialities and a microcredit client even served fresh cream butter on tortillas with delicious Costa Rican coffee. They also tasted termites and dragon fruit ice cream.

“Pura Vida” is the saying that exemplifies all things Costa Rica. People live with respect for the environment and with happiness and hospitality that is a delight to experience at EARTH University, at the Team Members’ home stays and at Finca Luna Nueva.

The volunteers learned traditional farming from their home stay families and how to live primarily and sustainably off the land. They were treated to salsa lessons, took 6 hours of Spanish lessons and learned about a variety of animals, birds, insects including sloths.
History:
The Asociación Costa Rica Grameen (ACRG) began operations in 2006 as a partnership between Grameen Trust and Whole Planet Foundation. It is a nonprofit organization offering microcredit through solidarity group lending methodologies focused on the poorest segment of the population. ACRG started with one branch on the Caribbean side of Costa Rica in the town of Siquirres and now boasts 7 branches throughout the region, with three more scheduled to open this year. ACRG achieved sustainability for the first time in 2013 and has continued that accomplishment in 2014.

WPF Partnership:
Whole Planet Foundation was the original ACRG start-up funder with a grant of $1,215,000. Since the start of the project ACRG has been able to raise funds from other sources such as the Costa Rican Development Bank and Oikocredit. Total WPF Authorized Grants and Loans: $3,637,658. Total WPF Funds Disbursed to Costa Rica: $3,262,129

Asociación Costa Rica Grameen’s Approach:
ACRG operates in the peri-urban and rural areas in the Eastern section of Costa Rica, specifically the Province of Limón. They are the largest microfinance organization in Costa Rica and the only one implementing a collateral-free solidarity lending methodology. ACRG’s rapid growth includes 4 new branches in 2015.

ACRG borrowers carry out activities in small enterprise, mostly commercial activities such as small stores, raising pigs and chickens, cheesemaking, handicrafts and food preparation.
**DONA ROSA**

Dona Rosa has a black pepper plantation. Dona Rosa said, "Without Grameen I would not be able to do this. This would not be possible." With a $200 loan just 6 months ago, Rosa was able to plant host trees on which the black pepper plant will grow.

**CENTER MEETING**

Each group Team Member volunteers were taught about the methodology of Asociación Costa Rica Grameen (ACRG) in a classroom and then attended a center meeting in the area of Sarapaqui. They witnessed the administration of loan dispersal and repayment and heard from individual clients about the businesses that they started or expanded with access to microcredit.

**ACRG**

The Team Members spent 2 days with WPF’s Armando Huerta, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean. They asked many questions and learned not only about ACRG but also about the many other microfinance institutions that Armando monitors and evaluates and learned about what his job with Whole Planet Foundation entails.

**ROSANGELA**

The volunteers bought bread from a microcredit client they met at the center meeting and visited a butterfly farm of another client named Marisol who has been in business for seven years and exports butterfly cocoons to rainforest projects and botanical gardens. A $600 loan allowed her to build new nurseries.

**LOAN BOOK**

A staff member of ACRG shared a microcredit client's loan book where the client keeps track of their progress in repayment of their loan. Currently, 100% of ACRG microcredit clients are women, they have 96% repayment and they are receiving loans from $50 to $3000 with an average loan size of $200. There are three different types of loans: animal loan, basic loan, and small enterprise loan.

**FLORIVEL**

The volunteers got to help a microcredit client named Florivel on her farm by milking her dairy cows and were treated to a breakfast of hot coffee and tortillas with the fresh cheese she makes in her business.
Since 1990, EARTH University’s innovative educational approach has been preparing young people from Latin America, the Caribbean and other regions, including Africa and Asia, to contribute to the sustainable development of their countries and construct a prosperous and just society.

EARTH offers a rigorous four-year undergraduate program in agricultural sciences and natural resources management and a prestigious, international faculty, providing a world-class scientific and technological education that emphasizes values, ethical entrepreneurship and environmental and social commitment.

EARTH was established by Costa Rican law in 1986 as a private, non-profit, international University and was created thanks to the support of the Costa Rican Government, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

Our Mission:
Prepare leaders with ethical values to contribute to sustainable development and to construct a prosperous and just society.

Our Vision:
Our actions are mission-driven to alleviate poverty, promote social justice and build a future where our communities achieve sustainable and shared prosperity.

Our Values:
Human development, Academic excellence, Ethical behavior, Sustainable development, Social consciousness, The Search for knowledge and Biodiversity Conservation.

In 2011, more than 1,900 individuals in the communities surrounding EARTH benefited from the Institution’s Community Development Program, which includes a service-learning course where students work with small-scale, local producers on their farms and with organized groups to promote sustainable community development.

As part of this program:
- Since its inception, the University has installed more than 500 bio-digesters to help farmers convert manure and other organic waste into methane gas that can be used for cooking. Several hundred more have been installed in Costa Rica by individuals or institutions trained by EARTH, and by EARTH alumni around the world.
- EARTH trained more than 1,780 individuals in agricultural waste management best practices.
- More than 70 small-scale farming families completed a training course on how to implement sustainable practices within their own businesses.

EARTH University and its commercial banana operation employ more than 600 individuals, providing fair wages and benefits, professional training, development opportunities and use of its library and sports and recreational facilities.

https://www.earth.ac.cr/en
In 2008 WFM provided funding to Earth University to research organic banana farming methods. A professor of irrigation and drainage, Rocque Vaquero explained the differences between Earth University's methods of organic banana farming and conventional companies' methods of organic farming. After working with bananas for 15 years, Roque is seeing things happen here that he never thought possible. He said this is "a great example of what the future can bring." Earth University intends to publish their findings from these years of research to show the world and conventional banana companies what is possible. The goal isn't necessarily to get to 100% organic but to change some of their practices. "People are concerned about the future and this is proof that we can change.'

The bananas that Whole Foods Market currently imports from Earth University are not classified as organic. However, Earth University's non-organic farming practices are safer and more sustainable than conventional organic methods and are rated "BEST" by Whole Foods Market's Responsibly Grown™ produce rating system. The experimental organic banana crop is not yet being exported. They are currently only sold in Costa Rica as the farm only produces small yields and would not be able to keep up with demand.
While visiting the Integrated Dairy Farm at EARTH University, the volunteers met Annette, a 4th-year student from Rwanda. Annette explained how they raise pigs, cows and buffalo utilizing a fully, self-sustaining method. Even the animal waste is drained into a bio-digester to collect the methane gases. These gases are then used to provide cooking heat and electricity at the farm. Upon graduation Annette intends to return to Rwanda to share what she has learned with her community. It is possible for African families to build their own small-scale bio-digester to generate gas for cooking. For example, if a family had just two pigs and one cow it could supply enough fuel for 8 hours of electricity.

Chris is a 2nd year student at EARTH University; he is from Uganda. Part of his studies include working at the PeriUrban Agricultural Project which focuses on urban farming methods. Chris has a passion to help communities address food security issues and waste management. Chris shared many creative ways to set up gardens with limited space and resources. Raised beds also offer gardening options for the elderly who may not be able to physically bend down to the ground. The Team Members helped make "salchichas" or "sausages". These are the vertical, hanging gardens or the rolls of substrate in the pyramid-style gardening methods. The substrate is composed of three materials: charcoal to filter toxins, shredded coconut fiber (or another plant material) to absorb water and rice husks.
One afternoon the Team Members met with a three-person student entrepreneurial group that was making, processing, packaging and selling fruit marmalades. One of these students, Amba, was from Costa Rica, Sofia is from Argentina and the Jana is from Sweden. While identifying a potential business product, these students recognized many fruits from the fields and farms at EARTH University that were not being utilized before becoming overripe. The students decided to collect these fruits and process them into flavorful marmalades. One business advantage that they have with this process is a reduced supply and production cost since most of their ingredients come at no cost to them. The students were generous with their product and time; they allowed the team to sample all of their flavors and then surprised each of them with a complimentary jar of marmalade.

STUDENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP: MARMALADE

EARTH University students shared their entrepreneurial product projects to include the team in their learning experience. The Team Member volunteers got to sample fried plantain, banana and Malanga chips and gave feedback on taste, texture, and seasonings. The students will use their feedback to modify their product before taking it to market as part of their entrepreneurial projects for school.

STUDENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP: BUTTERFLY COCOONS

Team Member volunteers met with Johana from Colombia, a third-year student at EARTH University. For her entrepreneurial project, she breeds butterflies to sell to collectors, breeders, botanical gardens and artists. She works with a broker who coordinates the export.
LEARNING ABOUT EARTH BANANAS

Team Members also got to shake the hand of Dr. Jose A. Zaglul, President of EARTH University. They chatted about the alliance that the two organizations, Whole Foods Market and EARTH University, have with one another. President Zaglul recalled the first time that the Whole Foods Market Board of Directors visited EARTH prior to our partnership. They understood, respected, and supported what was happening at EARTH. The board saw the bigger picture of what EARTH University is trying to achieve: education, fair trade, and sustainable practices. The Whole Trade® premium paid to EARTH University from WFM for EARTH bananas has supported 125 students’ scholarships in 5 years.
Team Members learned about Whole Trade® bananas and pineapples, learning about how they are grown, harvested and prepared for transport.

The first team refurbished a sports arena area for a school and beautified a preschool. The second team re-roofed and refurbished a scout house used by the community.

The children in the communities where the teams stayed and worked were excited to meet and spend time with the Team Members, playing and working on the projects.
A rewarding part of the Whole Foods Market Team Member Volunteer Program is the community service work that Team Members get to do, as well as the friendships that are formed between people of different nationalities and cultures while doing that work.

The primary project for the team from Trip 1 was resurfacing and beautifying a sports and exercise court to create a new sports area at El Camarón Elementary School in Santa Rosa of Guácimo to promote the practice of sports and exercise for children in a suitable and beautiful space impacting 70 children. They also refurbished the outside play area and painted furniture for a classroom at the Kindergarten El Camarón in Santa Rosa of Guácimo impacting the lives of about 30 more children.
Relationships are formed between Whole Foods Market Team Members from a variety of regions, facilities, stores and positions and the vendors and producers whose products we sell every day. The work that the volunteers do in the community is impactful and its effect will last a specific period of time, but the relationships that they form with members of the community can last a lifetime.

The project for the volunteers on Trip 2 was to refurbish a Scout House in Santa Rosa of Guácimo, improving the condition of the Scout House. The objective is to enhance youth participation in the community of Santa Rosa by providing suitable, safe and attractive youth spaces. This project will impact 53 young participants of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides and 7 adults, plus families, about 220 people.
completed projects team 1

The volunteers cleaned up a play area for kindergartners and refurbished their classroom furniture and resurfaced and refreshed the sports area at a local elementary school.

completed project team 2

Team Member Volunteers refurbished a scout house / community center for troop 343 inside and out, even replacing the roof.
HOME STAYS

As part of their cultural immersion with their service community, volunteers stayed on local fincas (farms) in the community of La Argentina for five nights. These fincas operate in partnership with Earth University. Many students from other countries stay with these host families for several months upon arrival to the country of Costa Rica to learn Spanish before school begins.

The home stay families operated various businesses as sources of income. These included: organic coffee production, soap production, cacao, tilapia, cows for meat and milk, chickens, dental services, and more. The volunteers enjoyed learning about these extensive and integrated fincas. Many of the fincas are also used as classroom projects for Earth University students to start to share what they are learning. Students have installed waste management systems, bio-digesters, raised bed gardens and more for these families.

These five nights at the fincas were complete with family bonding, farm tours, soccer games, horseback riding, special dinners, and more.
Costa Rica is the number one producer of pineapples in the world. The La Virgen Pineapple Farm, owned by Dole, is the producer of organic Whole Trade pineapples. This farm began the conversion to organic in the year 2000. La Virgen is guided by four pillars of beliefs which are social responsibility, quality, production, and cost. La Virgen employees are members of the Fair Trade Association Astravi.

When you buy a Whole Trade® product, a portion of what you paid goes into a development fund for the community that produced it. The farmers and farmworkers then determine how to use those funds to meet the needs of their community.

Whole Foods Market sources Whole Trade organic pineapples from Finca La Virgen in the lowlands of Northern Costa Rica. Workers at Finca La Virgen voted to invest community development funds in a learning center that provides courses in reading, computer skills and English. Over 150 students graduate from these courses each year. Next year they intend to build a daycare that will also offer summer camps and courses for youth.

Costa Rica is one of the most literate countries in Latin America, but access to secondary education is limited in isolated rural areas, where many children leave school in order to work. That’s why the community center at Finca La Virgen is so vital — it provides an opportunity for 550 members of the farming community to continue their education and develop new skills. Fair trade means more than just better wages for the workers; it also means the Astravi Fair Trade Association development fund can grow to make more community improvements. In 2000 this farm and fair trade association began to work with Whole Foods Market. This partnership has meant more profits for increased employee benefits.

The Astravi Fair Trade Association also coordinates transportation for employees to and from the workplace and learning center. Employee work hours are fair and reasonable as most shifts are just 8 hours in length. Employees also are able to rotate their tasks daily for added variety. Field workers make a higher wage and are able to work 6am – 2pm so most of their day is spent in lower temperatures. The workers at La Virgen are establishing a supermarket in the vicinity of the farm where employees and their families are able to purchase groceries at a reduced cost.

fincacorsicana.com
LEARNING ABOUT LA VIRGEN PINEAPPLES

Juan, an agronomist engineer, took the team out into the field to show them how pineapples are harvested. Juan is a recent graduate of EARTH University. They pick about 18,000-20,000 pineapples per day by hand. After picking the pineapples are delivered to the packing house where they are sent through a chlorine bath to kill any insects. This dries quickly as the workers sort for quality and start the packing process. Any leaves that fall off or plant waste that is removed is collected and given to local farmers for animal feed.
NEW CHAPTER
WHOLE FOODS MARKET SUPPLIER PARTNER

Information from New Chapter:

Discover the New Chapter Difference!
New Chapter® was founded in 1982 out of a desire to bring the healing value of nature’s botanicals into people’s lives. Our mission then was the same as it is today: To deliver the Wisdom of Nature, thus relieving suffering and promoting optimal health.

Based in Brattleboro, Vermont, New Chapter formulates whole-food cultured vitamin and herbal supplements with a profound appreciation for herbal synergies. The company is dedicated to both scientific validation and time-tested herbal tradition, and ensures that each product represents a new chapter in its category. Wild-caught Alaskan salmon oil, plant-sourced whole-food calcium, whole-herb extracts, and a comprehensive line of whole-food cultured vitamins and minerals compose our product line.

Committed to Sustainability
New Chapter has long been working toward an organic, sustainable world. We were the first in the supplement industry to produce vitamins and supplements under the standards of the National Organic Program (NOP). In fact, our entire multivitamin line is third-party certified made with organically grown vegetables and herbs. New Chapter is also committed to avoiding genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Our products were the first vitamins and supplements to be Non-GMO Project verified. We are also proud to be a Certified B Corporation—a new kind of company that uses the power of business to solve social and environmental problems.

A Socially Conscious Business
We are committed to infusing every product with our sustainable mission. Our concern for the planet is expressed through every act of business, whether large or small. New Chapter focuses on everything from recycled pens and used office furniture to closed-loop corrugated systems. We believe it’s vital to examine business impacts and aggressively try to reduce our footprint… to tread a little lighter on this planet we all share.

Helping Hands
New Chapter is devoted to several philanthropic partnerships, both at home in Vermont and across the globe. We look for organizations focusing on healing, for both planet and self. For example, New Chapter supports the Bumi Sehat birthing clinics in Indonesia by supplying Perfect Prenatal™ multivitamins to fulfill their supplement needs. In Costa Rica, we helped create Semillas Sagradas (Sacred Seeds) at our partner farm, Finca Luna Nueva. What began as a single sanctuary for medicinal plants vulnerable to loss of habitat and inappropriate harvesting has now become a network of Sacred Seeds gardens around the globe, managed by United Plant Savers. These are just a few of the ways that New Chapter focuses on human health and acts as environmental stewards.

www.newchapter.com
FINCA LUNA NUEVA
Finca Luna Nueva is New Chapter’s biodynamic partner farm set in the midst of a protected forest near Arenal volcano. A seed garden that is host to one of the largest medicinal herb gardens in the world.

MEETING TOM NEWMARK
Tom Newmark, former president of New Chapter spent time with the team, sharing the history of the company and their sourcing from Finca Luna Nueva.

BIODYNAMIC FARMING
Stephen Farrell, the owner and founder of Finca Luna Nueva, provided Team Members with the history of his biodynamic farm and how farms like his produce the best tasting food, preserving life and nature using the most upscale system of farming to preserve the quality and safety of food.

PLANTS
Finca Luna Nueva grows medicinal herbs and taught the team about many different plants, fruits and roots on a series of garden walks.

CHOCOLATE
Team Members learned the history of making chocolate from cacao bean and that the practice has been around for 7,000 years. The meaning of cacao is “food of the gods”.

FOREST EXPLORATION
Finca Luna Nueva is nested in a huge tract of protected. All kinds of unusual plants, insects and animals can be seen on guided walks. The team was taken on a night-time nature walk. They observed an endangered ant eater high up in the canopy of the rain forest and the popular red-eyed tree frog, ate termites from a tree, saw cockroaches of the jungle and meditated to the sounds of the night jungle.
TEAM 1

Working on the projects

Learning

Exploring all things Costa Rica

Experiencing nature, food, farms and sustainable agricultural projects

Discovering EARTH University
TEAM 2

Working on the projects

Learning

Exploring all things Costa Rica

Experiencing nature, food, farms and sustainable agricultural projects

Discovering EARTH University
ASHLEY

“I feel so privileged to be given the opportunity to be immersed in the Costa Rican culture. I feel proud to be a part of a company that supports and encourages communities to make a difference in the world. Not only did I learn a lot from the education and the work on this trip; I learned a lot from the amazing people with whom I went.”

DEVON

“We arrived as strangers and left as family. I had such a great connection with every person in our group, each person brought something unique to the table. Together we gained a great deal of knowledge about sustainable agriculture and Costa Rican culture. It was so incredible to see everyone grow in their own way every single day.”

WILL

“The Team Member Volunteer Program to Costa Rica was a perfect blend of education, service, and cultural immersion. One highlight for me was the time spent with my host family Alexis and Hilda on their finca. I am proud of my team. We worked so hard and made a difference for the Santa Rosa community. I will never forget this experience and can’t wait to share it with friends, family, and coworkers back home.”

BOB

“Diversity is a magnet for hope”. Our group was very diverse in our age, home cities, work and life experience, and the common thread was being WFM Team Members. We quickly bonded and became a travel family. The community, the host families, the Earth University staff and students became our extended family for two weeks. The people of Costa Rica are proud and have hope that the next generation will be better off than the current one. As I have told many people since my return this was one of the top five best things I’ve done in my life. Top three if you take out the birth of my two children.”

MARY PAT

“I have traveled all over the world but this trip to Costa Rica was the most rewarding and inspiring journey I have ever taken. All of the microcredit clients we met were so grateful to Asociación Costa Rica Grameen and openly admitted they would not have been able to give their families’ a better life without Grameen's help. Each client visit was unique but they all shared genuine warmth, resourcefulness and a strong work ethic.”

KELLY

“We lived and worked within community fincas (farms) to support community-based development. This experience has made us appreciate all of the opportunities that WFM has afforded us.”

CIERRA

“Not only did I gain knowledge about sustainable farming, medicinal herbs, and Costa Rican culture, I gained a family. We came into this trip as strangers and are leaving as close friends. Truly an experience I will never forget! Pura Vida! My favorite part of the trip was staying at the homestay because we were completely immersed in the Costa Rican farm culture. Our host was so passionate and patient with us. She let us tour her cacao farm, taught us the process and history of chocolate making, and sent us home with fresh cacao beans. We did all of this in Spanish! What an incredible experience I will never forget!”

SARA

“I went on this trip to see first-hand how Whole Planet Foundation affects change in communities around the world. What I learned has been so much more impactful. The people in Costa Rica have opened their homes and hearts to WFM Team Members. I milked cows, packed bananas, and had the opportunity to experience life as Ticos do. The people I’ve met will be a part of my life forever.”
**JENNIFER**

“The TM Volunteer Program is a worldly adventure focused on worldly community service, meeting new friends, and a complete learning experience with Whole Foods Market. Being a Whole Foods Market Team Member Volunteer is a privilege and an honor.”

**LESLEI**

“The WPF Volunteer Program gave me the opportunity to see firsthand how the Whole Planet Foundation program works -- as well as to see WFM food suppliers and programs. WFM is an amazing company and hope we can tell the whole story about all of the good we do! EARTH University is a game changer in sustainable agriculture worldwide. Incredible opportunity to meet students from around the world, stay on campus, and learn from them! Truly meaningful to me.”

**CESAR**

“I am lucky to have been part of the WFM TMVP 2015 Costa Rica group. It was a privilege to have lived 2 weeks with other Team Members. They are all special to me and will be in my mind and heart for the rest of my life. I learned a lot during these 15 days. It was a top-class tour, the guides were stupendous and the Costa Rican people were very friendly. I hope to use my learnings and apply them in my community, and to save this experience and put it to practical use in the real world. I thank WFM and the my region for making this trip possible.”

**TIFFANY**

“Meeting the microcredit clients was my favorite part, in particular Dona Florivel who has the dairy farm and her daughter and son in law have a banana farm on the same land. They were such gracious and beautiful people - hosting us for the day, allowing us into their homes. Seeing how they live every day, their struggles, but also how humble they are - it was very touching. I will never forget the special moments we had with each and every microcredit client and will tell their stories for years to come. An incredibly enriching experience which will stay in my heart forever - the clients who we met are so inspiring, the people who we crossed paths with taught us so much and made you realize what are the truly important things in life.”

**SARA**

“Our community service project was spectacular. We worked hard! It made me really grateful for some of the conveniences we have here in the states--namely pressure washers! The change in the community center was so gradual over the course of the week that at first I wasn’t all that proud of our project. When I went back and looked at the before and after photos, I was blown away!”

**CHELSEA**

“Meeting the microcredit clients was life-changing. After reading Banker to the Poor and then seeing the process in action was very real and tangible. I genuinely know that my donations to WPF are really changing the world.”

**LUIS FERNANDO**

“Amazing! Best trip ever, could not ask for more!”

**SARA**

“Participating on a WFM TM Volunteer Program trip has reignited my passion for Whole Foods Market. I am privileged to have seen the real-life effects of my purchases at Whole Foods Market. Microcredit programs, and specifically the Whole Planet Foundation, is a tried and true method of poverty alleviation.”
28 TEAM MEMBERS

29 MICROCREDIT CLIENTS MET

1 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SPORTS AREA REFRESHED

1 SCOUT HOUSE REPAIRED AND RE-ROOFED

11 SMALL FARMERS GREW THROUGH HOME STAY HOSTING

1 KINDERGARTEN AND PLAY AREA REFURBISHED