

Local Students Return From Study Abroad Trip to Argentina



The Southcoast of Massachusetts may be ‘home’ for two local students, but Jeremy Dias and Ashley Bendiksen say that life in Argentina gave them both a ‘second home’ away from home since their return on June 18th. Dias and Bendiksen, both students at Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island, spent an entire month studying abroad in Mendoza, Argentina to fulfill Spanish language credits. The total immersion program offered the students daily Spanish classes, residency with a host-family, and multiple excursions to explore and experience Argentina’s culture.

Dias, a 20-year-old native of Dartmouth, graduated from Bishop Stang High School in 2010. He is currently a Junior at the university studying Nursing and belongs to the Student Nursing Organization (SNO). He currently lives in Newport. Bendiksen, a 25-year-old native of Fairhaven and 2004 graduate of Fairhaven High School, is a Senior majoring in Administration of Justice with plans to attend Law School. She currently retains a 4.0 GPA, has made the Dean’s List each semester, and

has been inducted into the National Criminal Justice Honor Society. She currently resides in New Bedford, MA.

Dias and Bendiksen traveled with six other students and Dr. Linda Crawford, the Chairwoman of Salve Regina's Modern and Classical Languages Department. While in Mendoza, classes were attended at the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, through C.E.L.E. (Centro de Español como Lengua Extranjera), an institute dedicated to teaching Spanish as a foreign language. In addition to their studies, students participated in numerous program-sponsored activities. These included visiting a traditional gaucho ranch, hiking, horseback riding, and touring art and history museums, a wine vineyard, and an olive oil production site. In addition, the students visited natural landmarks and hiked the Andes Mountains, including a hike through Cerro Aconcagua, America's tallest peak. When schedules were open, as new friends, students explored the city of Mendoza and put their Spanish-speaking skills to work, making friends with 'the locals,' taking tango lessons, joining a local running group, and sipping yerba mate together. Since their return, both plan to continue their Spanish-language studies and hope to someday return.

In addition to their studies and academic excellence, both Dias and Bendiksen are actively engaged in civic and philanthropic efforts throughout Southeastern Massachusetts. Dias is currently the founder of Beth's Walk '2 Make Oral Cancer History' an annual event engaged in partnership with the Oral Cancer Foundation. Bendiksen takes on numerous active leadership roles across the SouthCoast as a SMILES Mentor and Big Sister, a board member with the Miss New Bedford Scholarship Program, and currently holds a position on the Board of Directors of the YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts as well as being Chairwoman of the YWCA's Leading Ladies.

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