FLORIDA ADVENTURE – TRIP OF A LIFETIME

***By: Saranda Conn—student class of 2013***

Over Easter break, I was able to participate in an Everglade experience in Florida with Ms. H-R and 4 of my classmates. Florida is not simply beaches, sun-shine and tan lines. My trip to Southern Florida taught me about the interconnectedness of the Everglades. It holds an entire vital ecosystem for both wildlife and man. What once used to be 2.5 million acres of a slough has decreased to a mere 1.5 million. Man swept in and began wiping out this area to make room for agriculture to sustain a growing population. Destructive strategies of eliminating all that water forever changed the natural flow of water. In addition, the building of canals blocked the much needed water from the Everglades altogether. I learned ways to help prevent the Everglades from completely diminishing any time soon.

We also explored the vast Mangroves within Florida. Three types exist: Red, White and Black Mangroves. Kayaking through these beautiful groves, we saw that they contain their own way of sustaining life. To tell them apart, you can examine their leaves with the red ones having a waxy leaf, the black ones with a layer of salt on their back sides and the white ones that produce a leaf with two bulbs of nectar for insects.

On this trip we also got to experience the chance of a lifetime, swimming with dolphins. It was nothing like Sea World. They were kept in their natural habitat of salt water. Gentle and soft, the dolphins were amazingly intelligent and very entertaining. They left us blown away with all their learned abilities and kisses on the cheek! I highly recommend any student interested in traveling to go on this trip with Ms. H-R. Our tour guide had so much to teach us and it was easy to tell that he definitely enjoyed what he did. Take the opportunity to expand your knowledge on things you may have never given a second chance to think about - go on the Florida Adventure with Ms. H-R during Spring Break.