

## *“Loyola led me to Teach for America”*

**Ryan Weidmann, '06, Spanish Teacher**



Each year, several Loyola graduates join Teach for America, accepting a two-year contract position to teach in low-income school districts in an effort to expand educational opportunities.

The chance to make an impact inspired psychology major Ryan Weidmann, '06, to apply for the program.

“During my senior year, I was busy exploring my options for after graduation when I heard about Teach for America at an Alpha Sigma Nu meeting,” says Weidmann, who is a member of the National Jesuit Honor Society. “I guess what really got me excited about the program was listening to current and former corps members talk so passionately about their students’ work in the classroom.”

A Spanish minor, Weidmann is now in his second year of teaching Spanish I and II at Patterson High School in southeast Baltimore. During his junior year at Loyola, he studied abroad in Alcala, Spain and, last summer, visited both Guatemala and Honduras in an effort to learn more about Central American culture.

“The most rewarding part of my job is teaching something and seeing that the students really get it and see the value of it,” says Weidmann. “It’s gratifying to see how hard they work for it. Baltimore City and its public school students get a bad rap for many reasons but I love knowing that so many of my students can, and are, helping to change this negative perception.”

Weidmann encourages his students to set goals for themselves and emphasizes the importance of education. Recently, he shared with them an article about being the first one in the family to attend college, which spurred an engaged discussion about what college is like and how they can prepare for it. After the class, a student approached him and said that the discussion made her decide she wanted to go to college.



*Weidmann at the Natural Reserve in Guatemala this summer*



*Weidmann and his girlfriend, Bridget Keenan '06, at the top of the Santa Maria volcano in Guatemala*

“Teaching at Patterson has been a really positive experience for me,” says Weidmann, who plans to stay after his commitment to Teach for America is over. Eventually, he would like to pursue a Ph.D. in Latin American studies and travel more.

Weidmann credits the service programs he participated in at Loyola with exposing him to the city and solidifying his choice to stay in Baltimore. “I’m really happy with how Loyola prepared me,” says Weidmann. “I couldn’t be happier with my decision to go to Loyola.”

To find out more about Teach for America, or how to apply, visit their [web site](#). The next deadline for applications is Nov. 2.