

Testimonial to CIAO! 2012

The CIAO! Program was an amazing, once in a lifetime, opportunity. I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to attend this program. We delved into Roman architecture, exploring the ancient ruins of the Forum to the modern style of the MAXXI Museum. This intensive program taught us a wide variety of concepts. Every day was a new experience, going to a different district of Rome, learning new concepts of design or unlocking new techniques in Google Sketch- Up. I will never forget everything I learned and experienced in this program.

Gail and Robert were excellent teachers. They managed to structure the program very well, maximizing learning and fun. Gail was a fabulous guide. She explained the architecture of the Romans, as well as general city-planning concepts, and then connected the ancient architecture to current architecture and how current architects incorporate the same techniques the Romans did when it came to city planning. Robert was a fantastic teacher. He was very helpful when explaining Google SketchUp and was very patient with all the students when they were struggling with the software. He explained to us how architects come up with concepts and apply their ideas on paper.

What makes the CIAO! Program so unique is that, unlike other architecture programs, which spend most of the time focusing on the design process, it is not just an educational experience; it's a cultural experience as well. We stayed at a large hazelnut farm with a villa in the Roman countryside. Anna, who was the mother in the family, made us traditional Italian food; probably the best Italian food I've ever had. Furthermore, she taught us proper Italian etiquette, such as never eating food with your hands...even with pizza!

Working with *La Sapienza* university students showed us a different perspective in the design process and the way they go about solving problems. The more interesting part was to see the artistic taste of the Italian students; it really shed a light on my views of Italy's society. I always regarded Italians as very conservative people, who preferred a traditional and classic life-style to a modern one. Now I see that Italy wants to be a modern society that still retains its heritage.

The CIAO! Program is the best architecture program a high school student could ask for. It gives them the tools to practice real architecture. Students will meet famous and very important Italian architects and get to see details in the architecture of Roman buildings and ruins that are not accessible to the general public. Better yet, students will get the chance to work on a real life design solution for a client and they'll be able to put their architectural knowledge to the test. If you are interested in becoming an architect, I highly recommend attending this program.

Ethan