00:00:00 Speaker 2

We sing a song about a kangaroo because you know it's a typical.

00:00:04 Speaker 2

Song that I used.

00:00:05 Speaker 2

To sing when I taught kindergarten in Argentina.

00:00:08 Speaker 2

Having the kids.

00:00:09 Speaker 3

From you know other parts.

00:00:11 Speaker 3

Of the world telling you.

00:00:12 Speaker 2

Like they sing.

00:00:13 Speaker 2

It in Spanish because I have the versions in Spanish and in English.

00:00:17 Speaker 2

I'm like, yeah, This is why.

00:00:20 Speaker 2

This is why I love classroom connections.

00:00:22 Speaker 2

This is why I do it.

00:00:24 Speaker 2

This is why I come here and what I like to volunteer in this program because it's like all about, you know, sharing our culture.

00:00:31 Speaker 2

And I think it's great.

00:00:34 Speaker 1

Welcome to the Global Minnesota podcast, connecting and forming and engaging Minnesota with the world.

00:00:40 Speaker 1

Our mission is to advance international understanding and engagement in every corner of the state.

00:00:46 Speaker 1

We do this with a variety of programs, including our public events, K12 education programs, great decisions, discussion groups and professional exchanges.

00:00:55 Speaker 1

To learn more, visit our website at globalminnesota.org.

00:00:59 Speaker 1

I'm Nicholas Hayan, marketing and communications manager for global Minnesota and today we are continuing our new podcast series by interviewing some of the amazing people that bring Minnesota to the world and the world to Minnesota.

00:01:12 Speaker 1

On today's episode, we're highlighting one of my favorite programs here at Global Minnesota Classroom Connection.

00:01:18 Speaker 1

Classroom connection is part of Global Minnesota's K12 education programs, and it brings the world to classrooms all over Minnesota.

00:01:26 Speaker 1

International visitors, many of whom are students at local universities, teach sessions on their country's history, culture and language in a fun and interactive format that sparks the curiosity of some of our youngest learners.

00:01:39 Speaker 1

Now these lessons are unique to each class and can be conducted at virtually or in person.

00:01:44 Speaker 1

And there is no fee to participate and global Minnesota staff handle all of the logistics for visitor placement and travel to learn more and to get your classroom signed up, you can visit global minnesota.org/education.

00:01:57 Speaker 1

I have the honor of being joined today by not one, but two guests who can tell us all about the classroom connection experience.

00:02:04 Speaker 1

Alejandro Romero Pavon is an international student from Honduras who recently taught lessons at Agustina Bores, level 1 English learners, class at Roseville Area High School.

00:02:15 Speaker 1

They have both joined the show today to talk about their experiences and to tell us more about how the classroom connection program benefits Minnesota students.

00:02:24 Speaker 1

So welcome to the show.

00:02:25 Speaker 1

And why don't we start with a quick introduction from each of you?

00:02:27 Speaker 1

Whoever wants to go first?

00:02:29 Speaker 2

I'm agustina, vorrei.

00:02:31 Speaker 2

I am an English teacher from Buenos Aires, Argentina.

00:02:36 Speaker 2

I was teaching English like in for English learners at Roseville Area High School and also Spanish at Hamlin University.

00:02:45 Speaker 2

And yeah, that's about me.

00:02:48 Speaker 4

That's great, hello Nick.

00:02:49 Speaker 4

Hello obviously now my name is Alejandro Romero.

00:02:52 Speaker 4

I'm from Tunisia, albondigas.

00:02:54 Speaker 4

I'm currently in the University of Saint Thomas is an exchange student, which I'll talk about a bit more.

00:02:59 Speaker 4

Later, but yeah, that's mostly on me.

00:03:01 Speaker 4

I'm just like here for a semester.

00:03:03 Speaker 4

I'm actually while we're.

00:03:04 Speaker 4

Recording this just two days from going.

00:03:07 Speaker 4

Back home, so I'm just.

00:03:08 Speaker 4

Literally trying to soak up all the experience and just like trying to enjoy this last few days in Minnesota, which I've loved a lot.

00:03:15 Speaker 4

So yeah, that's mostly about me, yeah?

00:03:18 Speaker 1

That's great, we're giving you a nice cold departure because it's about 0 degrees out right now.

00:03:24 Speaker 1

So yeah, well, great.

00:03:27 Speaker 1

Thank you both so much for participating and it's just great to to have you on and to hear your stories.

00:03:32 Speaker 1

Yeah, first let's I guess go to Alejandro.

00:03:34 Speaker 1

You tell us a little bit more about yourself.

00:03:36 Speaker 1

You know what are you studying and and what brought you to Minnesota.

00:03:39 Speaker 1

All places.

00:03:41 Speaker 4

Well, so I'm currently majoring in artificial communication and advertising and in university called Alpha Hundreds.

00:03:50 Speaker 4

Which basically just.

00:03:51 Speaker 4

Like the short name for the university is only think I'm about actually to be.

00:03:55 Speaker 4

In my senior.

00:03:56 Speaker 4

Year this beginning of my senior year was actually postponed for.

00:04:00 Speaker 4

This semester because I came here to Minnesota as an exchange student, I applied to a scholarship called call.

00:04:06 Speaker 4

You get which is basically funded by the Department of State of the United States of America, and it's administered by an organization called World Learning that base.

00:04:13 Speaker 4

He brings around 300 students, divided into the semester of fall and spring of a elective year or a student year or educational year to bring them to United States.

00:04:26 Speaker 4

Basically, just to have a the experience of a cultural exchange program having the sense of what's studying in the United States like.

00:04:33 Speaker 4

And getting to know people making.

00:04:35 Speaker 4

Actions bringing also like your culture to the eyes of American people and also bringing American culture to your eyes and just like seeing you know like there's a lot of difference in your lifestyles.

00:04:46 Speaker 4

But there's still a lot of things you have in common, and I've been able to meet really cool people and to share hunters with my friends and to in this case, Augustine's.

00:04:55 Speaker 4

As well, and just like people around me, I've enjoyed it a lot. So yeah, I've been in Minnesota since the 27th of August.

00:05:02 Speaker 4

I was here in the University of Saint Thomas during this whole time getting to.

00:05:07 Speaker 4

Share a room with.

00:05:09 Speaker 4

Two American guys and just like share experiences about stuff like and and.

00:05:14 Speaker 4

Basically what I do and what I want to like go into once I graduated college.

00:05:19 Speaker 4

Is sports journalism a major in our visual communication?

00:05:22 Speaker 4

But at some point I want to do sports journalism.

00:05:26 Speaker 4

So just like getting also to share that just to talk to people about sports and how different is sports and hunter is in the United States.

00:05:34 Speaker 4

Still, the similarities that you get to see get to go to sports games here in Minnesota because sports is a.

00:05:40 Speaker 4

Big, really big.

00:05:41 Speaker 4

Thing and not just in this way, cities but in the state like itself.

00:05:44 Speaker 1

Oh yeah.

00:05:45 Speaker 4

Yeah, getting to go to a twins game, getting to see the.

00:05:48 Speaker 4

Wolves seeing people fanned girl out about the the wild, they're the Vikings and see how they're really proud about the sports and also college sports that you found here in Saint Thomas.

00:05:59 Speaker 4

Also, how sport culture is really big?

00:06:01 Speaker 4

It's been really interesting.

00:06:02 Speaker 4

I've liked it a lot.

00:06:03 Speaker 4

I think the experience is really fulfilling when it comes to a professional aspect and.

00:06:08 Speaker 4

And just have having this broader view of the sport itself and the professional.

00:06:13 Speaker 4

Well, yeah, and I also take really good professional experience because I got to attend the last three home games of Minnesota United the soccer team.

00:06:22 Speaker 4

I specialized specifically my work in soccer and it happens to be that Minnesota United has 200 players which are called carving Arriaga and Joseph Rosales, so I got.

00:06:33 Speaker 4

I got a chance to go to the games, get a media press credential to.

00:06:37 Speaker 4

Be part of the media, previous media conferences.

00:06:40 Speaker 4

Talk to coach Adrian Heath, which is the really interesting man.

00:06:45 Speaker 4

His idea of soccer and his way of like the US soccer is really it's really.

00:06:49 Speaker 4

It's really fun.

00:06:50 Speaker 4

It's really like interesting to appreciate and to see and get to know the players.

00:06:54 Speaker 4

Get to also interview them.

00:06:56 Speaker 4

Going to the games.

00:06:57 Speaker 4

Seeing people.

00:06:58 Speaker 4

How they react to soccer, which is I know it's not like the biggest sport in in in the United States, but it's still.

00:07:03 Speaker 4

It's still something that's really important to them and really love it.

00:07:05 Speaker 4

And yeah, this whole experience and as well this whole four months.

00:07:09 Speaker 4

I think it's been like the best four months of my.

00:07:12 Speaker 4

Yeah and yeah, just get into being involved in a different culture or or community.

00:07:17 Speaker 4

It's been a really good good experience, yeah?

00:07:21 Speaker 1

That's excellent to hear.

00:07:21 Speaker 1

I'm really glad that you were able to get so much out of this and to see kind of that wide breadth of variety of professional sports that we have and and I thought that you were focus might end up being on soccer given it's you, know predominance around the world.

00:07:35 Speaker 1

I think, unfortunately, the United States, you know we do care about soccer at least once every four years.

00:07:41 Speaker 1

At the very least, you can count on that.

00:07:43 Speaker 4

Yeah, but there's there's no one like as happy right now for soccer as Augustina though.

00:07:43 Speaker 1

I I.

00:07:43 Speaker 1

Wish it was more.

00:07:49 Speaker 3

Oh yeah, Oh yeah, absolutely oh.

00:07:51 Speaker 1

Yes, congratulations on Argentina's World Cup win.

00:07:54 Speaker 2

I I take the I take the phrase on.

00:07:57 Speaker 2

Behalf of the.

00:07:57 Speaker 2

Team I I did it.

00:08:00 Speaker 3

I I wasn't.

00:08:00 Speaker 2

Sure, if I was going to be able to make it to today's podcast just because my voice has been pretty hoarse.

00:08:08 Speaker 2

After yesterday and absolutely I had to go.

00:08:12 Speaker 2

Like I had to keep my jersey.

00:08:15 Speaker 2

Just because I thought it was it was it?

00:08:17 Speaker 2

Was fitting for.

00:08:20 Speaker 3

Yeah, considering yesterday.

00:08:20 Speaker 1

Well, well, you sound you sound great today, so I think you're doing alright.

00:08:25 Speaker 3

I'm very bad.

00:08:26 Speaker 1

Great yeah, I guess I wanted to ask you, you know how?

00:08:29 Speaker 1

How did you decide to pursue a career in teaching in Minnesota?

00:08:33 Speaker 2

So my story goes a little bit.

00:08:37 Speaker 2

Behind I had been here in Minnesota in 2017, 2018 as a TA at Hamline University, and during that time I met who would later become my husband and so back in 2019 we decided I decided to.

00:08:57 Speaker 2

To come back to Hamlin, I had made connections.

00:09:01 Speaker 2

Really, really nice connections there.

00:09:03 Speaker 2

I learned about their teaching programs.

00:09:06 Speaker 2

They were very much in line with what I was looking for for a postgraduate degree because I I had my license in Buenos Aires and I was looking into doing a Masters degree.

00:09:18 Speaker 2

I finally went into the Masters of Arts and teaching.

00:09:22 Speaker 2

Program I got licensed here in the state of Minnesota and then, like back in May this year I was able to finish my master my Masters.

00:09:32 Speaker 2

I I wrote my fee.

00:09:34 Speaker 2

Just and and did a lot of work at Roseville area schools, particularly Roseville Area High School.

00:09:43 Speaker 2

I worked also for for their adult education program like just.

00:09:48 Speaker 2

Briefly, but but.

00:09:50 Speaker 2

Yeah, I'm more, I'm more so.

00:09:52 Speaker 2

Landed at Roseville Area High School.

00:09:55 Speaker 2

And the experience teaching there has been amazing.

00:09:58 Speaker 2

They have a very solid El program English learners program.

00:10:05 Speaker 2

When the time came I I knew global Minnesota from my time at Hamlin I had volunteered as a classroom collection volunteer.

00:10:15 Speaker 2

My experiences were slightly different from Alejandro's because he volunteered in what was my class at high school, but I volunteered in kindergarten and elementary classrooms very, very different, very different.

00:10:31 Speaker 2

Variance with the age group and everything.

00:10:34 Speaker 2

And then I thought this would be perfect.

00:10:37 Speaker 2

So I teach an.

00:10:38 Speaker 2

English learner's class.

00:10:40 Speaker 2

That is mostly level 1.

00:10:42 Speaker 2

Students who speak Spanish and I thought.

00:10:46 Speaker 2

Well, wouldn't it be great?

00:10:47 Speaker 2

If we could have an international student.

00:10:50 Speaker 2

Also speaks Spanish.

00:10:51 Speaker 2

Who studied English?

00:10:53 Speaker 2

You know, in their home country and who are having an educational experience, cultural experience, you're in in in the United States, I thought it would be an excellent opportunity for our hunter to be.

00:11:04 Speaker 2

A role model.

00:11:06 Speaker 2

To exchange with my students, to be able to.

00:11:09 Speaker 2

It was a great experience not only from the oh they are learning English perspective, you know, because he came and and gave a presentation that is really that was really in line with what we were learning at the time.

00:11:21 Speaker 2

It was great just just for that.

00:11:23 Speaker 2

But also culturally I think it was really important.

00:11:27 Speaker 2

And and and obviously from the perspective of multilingualism having Alejandro, you know, speaking both Spanish and English in his presentation, I thought.

00:11:37 Speaker 2

Well this is amazing.

00:11:38 Speaker 2

I want my kids to to aspire, you know, to that in the future and.

00:11:45 Speaker 2

Any opportunity for that you know would be great, so that's kind of in a nutshell, like how all of the paths eventually crossed.

00:11:55 Speaker 2

Cause I had my experiences.

00:11:57 Speaker 2

First as a volunteer then I was able to get into a little bit into the system in the schools and so I told Sylvia this is.

00:12:06 Speaker 2

Amazing how the connections continue to grow in that sense, because now I not only can visit but also I was able to host and and.

00:12:16 Speaker 2

That was really nice.

00:12:18 Speaker 1

Yeah, that's that's a really fantastic story and and a way to you know, as you said, kind of bring in not just the education of of a place of another country, but bringing in the, you know, English language learners education as well.

00:12:32 Speaker 1

And I think you raised a good point that actually the vast majority of classroom connection visits happen in, you know, in.

00:12:39 Speaker 1

In elementary schools, in some middle schools, but in this case we were able to actually kind of expand it out to, you know, to a high school to high school level students to help them practice those English skills.

00:12:50 Speaker 1

So I think that's that's a really great way that we can kind of broaden the horizons of that program.

00:12:54 Speaker 1

Yeah yeah, so we touched on a bit about.

00:12:57 Speaker 1

I just seeing how you were able to join classroom connection and hear about it.

00:13:01 Speaker 1

But Alejandro, how did?

00:13:03 Speaker 1

How did you hear about classroom connection and kind of what made you interested in and wanted to do that?

00:13:08 Speaker 4

So when I came to Saint Thomas, I very quickly, I think, joined a very group of friends like very good group of friends guys.

00:13:16 Speaker 4

That and girls that were really fun to just talk around and hang around, and one of them named Vienna who she is from Romania.

00:13:24 Speaker 4

She's just a transfer.

00:13:25 Speaker 4

She's transfers doing the joint she's done is this year she comes from a university.

00:13:29 Speaker 4

The Netherlands

00:13:30 Speaker 4

And she was telling me about this program through that she joined and got the chance to go to an elementary school.

00:13:37 Speaker 4

As I mentioned and and go to talk about Romania and how the kids were really excited, she was like she was like little cards to the the cards that the kids made, like in thanking him, thanking her for for the presentation.

00:13:50 Speaker 4

And me and uh, and another friend, which is on the scholarship that I'm in here and was also here for a semester called Rowan, he's.

00:13:56 Speaker 4

Albania we said like hey, this would be good to give it a try and we also had like to do some community service hours because we're scholarship so we thought it would be just like a great like experience to also do the Community service hours but just being able to share our culture and just being able to present it to the the people that we that we could and would listen.

00:14:17 Speaker 4

So we got in touch with Sylvia from Lowell, Minnesota.

00:14:20 Speaker 4

The director I don't know.

00:14:21 Speaker 4

She's like the full director of Global Minnesota.

00:14:23 Speaker 4

Or just like the classroom connection program, but she she was great.

00:14:27 Speaker 4

She was really fun to to talk around to hang around.

00:14:30 Speaker 4

She gave us a really good workshop on how the program itself.

00:14:34 Speaker 4

And it was fun because just as I was, Sienna said, like normally you go to an elementary.

00:14:38 Speaker 4

School to a kindergarten.

00:14:39 Speaker 4

You took the you talked to little kids so the full like workshop was about like OK when the kids are happy you have to be happy as well if they're like filling a bit down, you gotta like light them up.

00:14:49 Speaker 4

But you know?

00:14:49 Speaker 4

It's just like cheer.

00:14:50 Speaker 4

Cheer them up and my experience.

00:14:53 Speaker 4

Was different because.

00:14:55 Speaker 4

Obviously, the students are probably like around what 141516?

00:14:58 Speaker 2

Yeah, they're 141516 like we have different ages. Well, that's the that's a characteristic of a English learner's classes, so there there can be different ages so.

00:15:13 Speaker 4

Yeah, so even though.

00:15:14 Speaker 4

I was not like speaking to.

00:15:15 Speaker 4

Kids specifically, I think it was like a.

00:15:17 Speaker 4

Bit easier for.

00:15:18 Speaker 4

Me because I could like be very honest about certain stuff.

00:15:22 Speaker 4

And just like explain under, it's in a perspective that a more mature kid that is growing and going through their teenagers would be easier to comprehend.

00:15:32 Speaker 4

And the fact that they were also.

00:15:34 Speaker 4

Most of them were Latin American students.

00:15:36 Speaker 4

There was one student from was it, Somalia, Austin?

00:15:40 Speaker 2

Ethiopia, yeah.

00:15:41 Speaker 4

Ethiopia, Ethiopia.

00:15:43 Speaker 4

the IT was.

00:15:44 Speaker 4

It was a really good experience like we shared a lot of like things in in common and so I guess you said I was like speaking in English but then also in Spanish so we could just like share that that similarities together and it was like easier to comprehend and try to also reflect them.

00:16:01 Speaker 4

Well, my culture is not as different as theirs, but it's also it's not as different as the one we're in here, and it's still in the fact that we can adapt to what's here in the United States.

00:16:11 Speaker 4

Living English in a better way, taking every chance that we get like in educational.

00:16:17 Speaker 4

And it's really good.

00:16:19 Speaker 4

It's really good experience.

00:16:20 Speaker 4

It's really something that builds up for your future.

00:16:23 Speaker 4

And even though we had a second visit actually to find out that because of time we couldn't be able to go to, I think that there was no part of the presentation which I talked about my scholarship and and everything that that helped me get here is something that they also can take away and and and and aspire to the same.

00:16:37 Speaker 4

Even something greater than I did because I was only here for a couple of months, but they if they work really hard can go to college and go to the four full years and get a degree and have a really great life because it it does.

00:16:49 Speaker 4

Help a lot college.

00:16:50 Speaker 4

Like everything but it is something that actually serves a real purpose in your life and can help you set up in a really better way.

00:16:58 Speaker 4

So yeah, I think it was a really good experience.

00:17:00 Speaker 4

I thanked Deanna because you mentioned it and and Sylvia, for all her help during the process.

00:17:05 Speaker 4

But yeah, I really enjoyed it a lot.

00:17:08 Speaker 1

Yeah, that's great that you're able to to kind of inspire some of these students too, you know, because as you said, college is is very helpful.

00:17:15 Speaker 1

It may not necessarily be everything for everyone, but just to encourage people that it is an option you can pursue if you want to, and the benefits that you can get from that are.

00:17:25 Speaker 1

Are immeasurable, so.

00:17:26 Speaker 1

Yeah, that's excellent. And by the way, uh, yeah. Sylvia's is the manager of the K12 education program, not the the President of Global Minnesota who is now Phil Hansen.

00:17:37 Speaker 1

Although funny enough sometimes that that confusion has happened with I think Phil recently visited one of the classrooms they thought, is there a new?

00:17:47 Speaker 1

New director, no, that's that's the president.

00:17:50 Speaker 1

He's always been the manager, but we have a different president, but Augustine, so how?

00:17:55 Speaker 1

I guess how has that experience been for you and and specifically, how did the students really feel about those visits?

00:18:01 Speaker 2

As far as like high school.

00:18:03 Speaker 2

My students at the.

00:18:05 Speaker 2

In that particular class loved.

00:18:07 Speaker 2

It the visit the visit.

00:18:08 Speaker 2

And everything you know I like, Hendro was able to bring in from my perspective in in in that situation, as a teacher, I find the the opportunity to have.

00:18:21 Speaker 2

Classroom connection visitors.

00:18:24 Speaker 2

It's a great starting point for any.

00:18:26 Speaker 2

Cultural discussion that you want to have.

00:18:28 Speaker 2

It can adapt easily into like, really any lesson that you would may want to propose, and it can be.

00:18:36 Speaker 2

Like I said, a starting point, obviously.

00:18:38 Speaker 2

At the moment we.

00:18:40 Speaker 2

Were working with a unit on what kind?

00:18:44 Speaker 2

Of person are you?

00:18:45 Speaker 2

And it was.

00:18:45 Speaker 2

Like it was really great to just have that the type of presentation.

00:18:49 Speaker 2

Like sort of mid through the unit because he was bringing into all of the discussions we had previously had and the students have previously had about about themselves.

00:19:01 Speaker 2

And then you know, sort of Alejandro's presentation was like a model for students to later do presentations about themselves, which is really what from a communication perspective, from learning English for communication purposes. That's really great, and it's it's very important, regardless of whether or not.

00:19:21 Speaker 2

Like we're saying, if if they wanted to pursue, you know a university degree.

00:19:26 Speaker 2

Really great and really valid to see these experience, but also if they.

00:19:30 Speaker 2

Don't if they.

00:19:31 Speaker 2

That that's not the interest is.

00:19:33 Speaker 2

College is not like on the cards like just having the experience to interact with other multilingual multicultural people you know and and creating those connections.

00:19:47 Speaker 2

Is just really very important.

00:19:50 Speaker 2

Then as a volunteer I I volunteered a number.

00:19:54 Speaker 2

Of times already, I do have my.

00:19:58 Speaker 2

I have my.

00:19:58 Speaker 2

Show my whole my.

00:19:59 Speaker 2

Whole show for kindergarten, which I I tell and.

00:20:04 Speaker 2

I I share that presentation.

00:20:06 Speaker 2

In barely the same way, all the time.

00:20:09 Speaker 2

Cause I've done it.

00:20:10 Speaker 2

Multiple times like Aunt Sullivan, I've been there like 3 or 4 \* I love.

00:20:17 Speaker 2

Visiting Anne Sullivan.

00:20:19 Speaker 2

By the way, it's a great school.

00:20:21 Speaker 2

Great kindergarten program, and you could just, I mean to me.

00:20:26 Speaker 2

I mean, it's it's it's amazing just because I get to spend the morning with like 5 year old, 6 year olds from different parts of the world, the the.

00:20:37 Speaker 2

Have diversity I can, I can and I always seek to sort of interact with, but seeing kids from Somalia talking about mate because I told them about Argentine mate.

00:20:49 Speaker 2

And showing them how we prepare, like how my mom or my dad prepare Martha.

00:20:55 Speaker 2

That is like the typical drink that they will get first minute in the morning when we wake up and that you know, it's such a traditional thing for us and such an Argentine thing to do.

00:21:06 Speaker 2

Being able to share that and having the kids.

00:21:09 Speaker 2

Walk through the steps of how to make.

00:21:11 Speaker 2

Matte and then.

00:21:12 Speaker 2

Telling you like eventually getting to the point where they tell you.

00:21:16 Speaker 2

How to prep?

00:21:18 Speaker 2

And then having that like also as a.

00:21:21 Speaker 2

Starting point of like to have other conversations like what?

00:21:24 Speaker 2

Do what do you drink in Somalia?

00:21:26 Speaker 2

Is there you know something like matte or or like tea or like coffee?

00:21:32 Speaker 2

That is not.

00:21:32 Speaker 2

That are neither of those drinks, but you know.

00:21:35 Speaker 2

That you're doing.

00:21:35 Speaker 2

Some, I think that that that is where the.

00:21:38 Speaker 2

Real value of these.

00:21:39 Speaker 2

This program lies.

00:21:40 Speaker 2

When you see a 5 year old 6 year old 7 year old, you know.

00:21:44 Speaker 2

Same Buenos Dias and.

00:21:47 Speaker 2

Asking you to please like I we sing a.

00:21:50 Speaker 2

Song about a.

00:21:52 Speaker 2

Because you know it's a typical.

00:21:54 Speaker 2

Song that I.

00:21:54 Speaker 2

Used to sing when I taught kindergarten in Argentina.

00:21:58 Speaker 2

Having the kids.

00:21:59 Speaker 3

From you know other parts of.

00:22:01 Speaker 2

The world telling you like please sing.

00:22:03 Speaker 2

It in Spanish because I have the versions in Spanish and in English.

00:22:06 Speaker 3

Hmm, I'm like yeah This is why.

00:22:09 Speaker 2

This is why I love classroom connections.

00:22:11 Speaker 2

This is why I do.

00:22:12 Speaker 2

Like This is why I come here and what I like to volunteer in this program because it's like all about, you know, sharing our culture.

00:22:22 Speaker 2

I think it's great.

00:22:23 Speaker 1

What I love the most is is, as you said, how it shows.

00:22:27 Speaker 1

There are ways in which we're different, but how so many of the the differences that we think exist are superficial because so much of what we do is the same.

00:22:35 Speaker 1

There's so many of these crosscurrents that.

00:22:37 Speaker 1

You know that children pick up on in such a young age and they see that really, we're not all that different.

00:22:42 Speaker 1

We do things in slightly different ways, but we have so many similarities and and that's what I'm really excited for.

00:22:48 Speaker 1

I have a four year old who will be in kindergarten next year and hopefully we'll get a chance to to get exposed to this program to.

00:22:54 Speaker 1

See some of that.

00:22:56 Speaker 2

I mean, I, I really feel.

00:22:59 Speaker 2

Classroom connections does a great job of exploring diversity and exploring.

00:23:05 Speaker 2

You know.

00:23:06 Speaker 2

Everything and anything that is around there in the world without making it like this.

00:23:13 Speaker 2

Oh, the other right without singling it out without making no we just have.

00:23:19 Speaker 2

Wonderful conversations about our lives, really, and I think that that's fantastic.

00:23:27 Speaker 2

I don't know if this was I had those experience, but but I really.

00:23:31 Speaker 2

It felt really natural and really like really nice and I hope that.

00:23:36 Speaker 2

Like that we can continue to to to use this program to promote that kind.

00:23:43 Speaker 2

Those kinds of interactions in our classrooms and in society as well.

00:23:48 Speaker 1

What do you think, Alejandro?

00:23:49 Speaker 1

I know your your audience was slightly older.

00:23:52 Speaker 4

No, yeah, totally I.

00:23:53 Speaker 4

I think I think the fact that the that.

00:23:55 Speaker 4

We had like the the similarity that, like Augustine, students were most like Americans.

00:24:01 Speaker 4

There was a girl from Spain.

00:24:02 Speaker 4

There was the the the kid from from Ethiopia.

00:24:06 Speaker 4

Just like yeah, it was really fun to show stuff that, for example, I I.

00:24:12 Speaker 4

Was telling them.

00:24:13 Speaker 4

When we were speaking about which Hunter is.

00:24:15 Speaker 4

I would show them like a map of Central America and maybe they could like realize OK, my country where I come from is is.

00:24:20 Speaker 4

I know that.

00:24:21 Speaker 4

That's there, but I'm not trying.

00:24:23 Speaker 4

I'm now trying to figure out where she is.

00:24:24 Speaker 4

Which hunters was?

00:24:26 Speaker 4

Just also speaking out some cities, some things we do 100 is and.

00:24:29 Speaker 4

Then realize, hey.

00:24:30 Speaker 4

Probably that's also what we do in our country, and that's not something that we have to stop doing while we're.

00:24:36 Speaker 4

In the United States.

00:24:36 Speaker 4

But actually something that.

00:24:38 Speaker 4

We can keep keep doing here and sharing.

00:24:41 Speaker 4

It with the.

00:24:42 Speaker 4

People around us.

00:24:43 Speaker 4

Yeah, I think it's like a great form of.

00:24:45 Speaker 4

Are you saying the introduction like bringing the world to Minnesota and Minnesota afterwards, being brought to the rest of the world as well?

00:24:53 Speaker 4

So yeah, it's it's really fun.

00:24:55 Speaker 1

Too well, Speaking of.

00:24:57 Speaker 1

Minnesota, I know you will be leaving soon.

00:24:59 Speaker 1

Returning to Honduras.

00:25:01 Speaker 1

Yeah, I guess just overall.

00:25:03 Speaker 1

How was your time in Minnesota?

00:25:04 Speaker 1

You know what?

00:25:05 Speaker 1

What did you like most about visiting?

00:25:06 Speaker 4

Ohh I honestly I love almost everything and I've said almost everything cause yeah I think everything is like a bit cliche to say.

00:25:15 Speaker 4

But still every.

00:25:17 Speaker 4

Overall, it's a really positive experience.

00:25:19 Speaker 4

I met people that really give you that Midwestern warmness you guys like sometimes mentioned.

00:25:25 Speaker 4

People are super nice.

00:25:26 Speaker 4

People are super welcome.

00:25:27 Speaker 4

I guess it's some it was my first time here actually in.

00:25:30 Speaker 4

The United States you always like.

00:25:32 Speaker 4

When you're in another sense of the world.

00:25:34 Speaker 4

Or other and other countries you get like to hear.

00:25:36 Speaker 4

About how Americans.

00:25:36 Speaker 4

Are and you maybe have like this idea that they'll be really divided or there will be like 2 years.

00:25:42 Speaker 4

But I really didn't really didn't encounter any experience like that.

00:25:46 Speaker 4

I my roommates, for example, I think I like the best example to show that they're really welcoming.

00:25:52 Speaker 4

They're really nice.

00:25:53 Speaker 4

When they moved in, I came here actually a couple days before them and when when they actually entered the room and I could hear them like oh, they they they're here, I'll just go say hi or something they will hug me us.

00:26:04 Speaker 4

If they knew.

00:26:05 Speaker 4

For a couple of years and their parents.

00:26:07 Speaker 4

It was like.

00:26:08 Speaker 4

Really nice to meet you and just like getting to know our teachers, getting to know our classmates that were really fascinated.

00:26:14 Speaker 4

Actually, I was surprised by that where they were fascinated by the fact that they had an international student in their class and that could share stuff about how things are done in their country or how things are done from where where they come from.

00:26:26 Speaker 4

And yeah.

00:26:27 Speaker 4

I'm going back actually in.

00:26:28 Speaker 4

A couple of days and it's hard to say goodbye.

00:26:30 Speaker 4

It's actually very sweet.

00:26:32 Speaker 4

Because even even though it's almost the holidays, you're excited to go home to see your family and and stuff like that.

00:26:37 Speaker 4

It's hard to to say goodbye to the good, really good friends and connections you made here.

00:26:43 Speaker 4

Knowing that probably there's attensity.

00:26:45 Speaker 4

You won't see a couple of them ever again, even though you really want to come visit.

00:26:48 Speaker 4

I'm I'm.

00:26:48 Speaker 4

I'm really like planning on coming and visit again and then getting to explore.

00:26:52 Speaker 4

The Twin Cities and and other sites of Minnesota.

00:26:55 Speaker 4

A bit more than what I did.

00:26:57 Speaker 4

I think it's like kind of hard, but yeah, I'm I'm I'm really glad about the time that I had here.

00:27:02 Speaker 4

I'm really blessed.

00:27:03 Speaker 4

By that time I think my a.

00:27:05 Speaker 4

Good part of my.

00:27:05 Speaker 4

Heart is staying here in Minnesota.

00:27:08 Speaker 1

And if you're into the wilderness, the boundary waters up north.

00:27:12 Speaker 1

You gotta check that out.

00:27:13 Speaker 4

I will, I definitely will.

00:27:15 Speaker 1

No canoeing experience required, although it's helpful.

00:27:19 Speaker 1

So Augustina, what's something you wish everyone knew about this classroom connection program or, I guess, just generally about teaching other cultures in the classroom.

00:27:28 Speaker 2

The most important thing.

00:27:30 Speaker 2

Is the possibility of starting a conversation?

00:27:36 Speaker 2

About about culture without.

00:27:40 Speaker 2

Placing so much focus on like you said before, right?

00:27:45 Speaker 2

And this idea of the differences, but rather on how how every everybody brings to the table really can make your your day difference in a better way.

00:27:59 Speaker 2

How can?

00:28:00 Speaker 2

Be like the starting.

00:28:01 Speaker 2

Point of new connections of growth of learning process.

00:28:09 Speaker 2

I mean I can only I can only.

00:28:12 Speaker 2

Speak for the experiences I've.

00:28:13 Speaker 2

Had but I'm.

00:28:14 Speaker 2

Like the the the teachers that ensolite every time I I get to visit they they receive me they they.

00:28:24 Speaker 2

Open arms, I mean they are already they.

00:28:27 Speaker 2

It already feels like family after like three or four times like this is.

00:28:32 Speaker 2

You know, Miss Tina from Argentina, you know was just like something I've been through for the last.

00:28:38 Speaker 2

What three years, four years and for someone like me, who's you know?

00:28:43 Speaker 2

And and I have been an international.

00:28:45 Speaker 2

Student currently like in my process of adjusting status and and being a a permanent.

00:28:50 Speaker 2

Resident here in the.

00:28:51 Speaker 2

United States but.

00:28:52 Speaker 2

I mean that is really.

00:28:56 Speaker 2

Important from a perspective of like.

00:28:58 Speaker 2

You're not alone anymore, you know.

00:29:02 Speaker 2

It it it?

00:29:03 Speaker 2

It doesn't remove any sort of cultural.

00:29:07 Speaker 2

Isolation and you.

00:29:08 Speaker 2

May feel you you really.

00:29:11 Speaker 2

Do find that that place.

00:29:13 Speaker 2

That kind of feels like.

00:29:15 Speaker 2

Home and I can only you know, echo with Alejandro said and.

00:29:19 Speaker 2

Add more more.

00:29:20 Speaker 2

Praise for Sylvia, who's who's really someone I count as a friend and and family after so many years of like collaborating because she really does and goes like.

00:29:33 Speaker 2

That's her her.

00:29:34 Speaker 2

Part in making you feel that way, making you.

00:29:36 Speaker 2

Feel like you know that.

00:29:38 Speaker 2

First of all, that that she understands.

00:29:40 Speaker 2

However, whatever it is that she may be feeling right.

00:29:43 Speaker 2

You know, like as an international student.

00:29:47 Speaker 2

And or an international foreign person here in the.

00:29:49 Speaker 3

United States but also like.

00:29:51 Speaker 2

You know she's there to create those.

00:29:54 Speaker 2

For you to to to have this opportunity of like sharing a little bit about your your country and about your culture and and seek that interaction and have that interaction with others and get to learn about others.

00:30:09 Speaker 2

It wasn't only the people who got to.

00:30:11 Speaker 2

Be in my lessons who who learned.

00:30:13 Speaker 2

A lot about Argentina.

00:30:15 Speaker 2

I got to learn.

00:30:15 Speaker 2

A lot myself from from the kids from the.

00:30:19 Speaker 2

Teachers who work with.

00:30:21 Speaker 2

I think that that's just wonderful.

00:30:24 Speaker 1

Yeah, I love that and I think you can learn so much about another country, but so much about yourself by by embarking on that.

00:30:31 Speaker 1

So Alejandro, what's what's something that you you want to make sure everybody knows about Honduras?

00:30:37 Speaker 1

You know, this is kind of your platform to, Umm, to explain a little bit about about your home country and kind of what you've been teaching the students about.

00:30:44 Speaker 4

Ah, there's a lot of things, but I would like to say that we're really happy people.

00:30:49 Speaker 4

We we enjoy life.

00:30:50 Speaker 4

We work hard.

00:30:51 Speaker 4

We do our best and not only have the best for or do the best for ourselves and just like bring everything together like that can help our lives specifically individually.

00:31:02 Speaker 4

But for the people around us for our families.

00:31:05 Speaker 4

For the ones we care a lot and.

00:31:06 Speaker 4

And and yeah, for example, I would like to.

00:31:08 Speaker 4

Well, obviously as soon as like if you wanted to see how people dancing, enjoying themselves, go to the North Coast funders.

00:31:14 Speaker 4

Let's say, uh, the the the, the Bay Islands or penalty one.

00:31:18 Speaker 4

Now you'll see people dancing.

00:31:20 Speaker 4

You'll see people enjoy life.

00:31:21 Speaker 4

You'll see people really happy you see people describing our country in such a poetic and really romantic and.

00:31:29 Speaker 4

Happy way that I think it's like it's really something that that makes me proud of.

00:31:35 Speaker 4

And to say that I come.

00:31:36 Speaker 4

From there, even though I.

00:31:37 Speaker 4

Live in a different area of the country.

00:31:39 Speaker 4

Then I'm not that close to the beach or the north.

00:31:41 Speaker 4

Goes I still feel it's like something that represents us all speaking on a country.

00:31:46 Speaker 4

The best way then yeah and you know the life in America there are problems that still can be fixed and that maybe that's the thing that the world likes to highlight the most.

00:31:55 Speaker 4

But there's so much beauty like natural beauty and and and the beauty and the the the souls of people that are live there.

00:32:02 Speaker 4

And yeah, also, if you want to really visit places with good food, really, really beautiful nature and and just have a good time and just have like getting to know this experience of a a different environment than you know you are in the United States.

00:32:19 Speaker 4

I think Hunter is a great place to.

00:32:20 Speaker 4

Go to of being from like.

00:32:21 Speaker 4

I don't.

00:32:22 Speaker 4

I think you never realized.

00:32:23 Speaker 4

How proud you are of of where you come from until you are in a in a place where I'm in.

00:32:29 Speaker 4

But yeah, I I just I, I think I'll forever be a the best ambassador that I can be about my country.

00:32:35 Speaker 4

And I hope that I can represent it with the best in the best way possible.

00:32:40 Speaker 1

I love that.

00:32:41 Speaker 1

I think you have been.

00:32:42 Speaker 1

A great ambassador.

00:32:42 Speaker 1

So far, thanks.

00:32:44 Speaker 1

I guess Agustina since you essentially from Argentina originally.

00:32:48 Speaker 1

Why don't I give you the chance to kind of talk a little bit about Argentina and what?

00:32:52 Speaker 1

What's something that you wish everyone knew about about that country?

00:32:56 Speaker 2

Well, I think that.

00:32:59 Speaker 2

I have to echo a little bit of what?

00:33:01 Speaker 2

Alejandro also said, you know.

00:33:03 Speaker 2

It is, it is.

00:33:04 Speaker 2

Important to get the the word out there that.

00:33:06 Speaker 2

Would you know?

00:33:07

It's it's not.

00:33:08 Speaker 2

About all of our, you know.

00:33:10 Speaker 2

Our problems are the things that you know that don't really work but but also about the places, the beauty, the nature, the

00:33:21 Speaker 2

The people, the people.

00:33:23 Speaker 3

Too, it is about the soccer absolutely, but also boy but.

00:33:30 Speaker 3

Well so.

00:33:31 Speaker 2

So about the camaraderie and the friendship and the you know.

00:33:35 Speaker 2

One of the one of.

00:33:36 Speaker 2

The things that I that I can highlight, for instance.

00:33:39 Speaker 2

From the the.

00:33:40 Speaker 2

That football piece or that soccer piece is not so much like the the sport part, which is obviously great and and fantastic.

00:33:49 Speaker 2

And we're all happy but but more so like.

00:33:52 Speaker 2

One of the things that I that I saw the most was like how the team had connected in such an Argentine way.

00:33:59 Speaker 2

The way I the way I.

00:34:00 Speaker 2

See it, I see.

00:34:01 Speaker 2

It right and and how that camaraderie?

00:34:04 Speaker 2

Was that what brought them to the final?

00:34:06 Speaker 2

To that success, and those are the stories.

00:34:09 Speaker 2

Really that I want to and the the the narratives that I want to share about my.

00:34:12 Speaker 2

Country, I mean classroom connection is an important program.

00:34:16 Speaker 2

In the in.

00:34:16 Speaker 2

In the sense that we can really tell.

00:34:18 Speaker 2

The multiple stories of our countries of our cultures and not that single story.

00:34:25 Speaker 2

That is the the one that you may get, you know through the media, which is not.

00:34:30 Speaker 2

You know, may may or may not be.

00:34:33 Speaker 2

A first hand.

00:34:35 Speaker 2

Of of of what really is.

00:34:36 Speaker 2

Or it may be a very very.

00:34:39 Speaker 2

Small or partial account.

00:34:40 Speaker 2

And you know, maybe missing out a lot of the the, the generosity, the culture, the the, the, the, the, you know the love, the joy that that is lived in in that we live in.

00:34:55 Speaker 2

In the countries that were that we come from.

00:34:57 Speaker 1

Yeah, I love that we can go beyond the headlines and like you say like with you know, the World Cup win.

00:35:03 Speaker 1

You can see how it transforms the society and brings everyone together.

00:35:07 Speaker 1

There and you know you have parties in the streets and and everybody's celebrating and things would shut down for three or four hours just to celebrate and and you, you miss some of that. If you're not paying attention.

00:35:20 Speaker 1

Great, well, I guess before I wrap up, just want to give you both a chance to there's anything else you wanted to mention or talk.

00:35:30 Speaker 4

Well, I just want to say like honestly thanks for going to soda just for the fact that gave us the opportunity to bring our cultures to.

00:35:37 Speaker 4

In this case, my high school and I know there's also been other hunters that have been able to do the program and and get to also share with maybe a little smaller age group like it's about my country.

00:35:50 Speaker 4

Basically, the work itself, like I think this thing I said, bring your diversity and and cultural exchange to the world and to local community here in Minnesota and I just felt privilege for the fact.

00:36:00 Speaker 4

That I got to go to.

00:36:02 Speaker 4

And I'll hear also in the podcast and sharing about how this work is actually, I believe, making Minnesota really more in place and also bringing that international aspect in in one to to the state and and in the future of the state.

00:36:17 Speaker 4

In which are these kids?

00:36:18 Speaker 4

And and yeah, I I really feel grateful for.

00:36:20 Speaker 4

Everything that you guys gave me.

00:36:22 Speaker 4

And and yeah, I'll treasure it forever.

00:36:24 Speaker 4

Yeah, thanks.

00:36:25 Speaker 2

Yeah I want to add.

00:36:26 Speaker 2

I'm forever grateful for for global Minnesota.

00:36:29 Speaker 2

It was like I always tell Sylvia this like it was just wonderful to have that opportunity to get into the schools like way before even my program at Hamline University offered me to to go into the schools and get to know a little bit of like the ends and outs of.

00:36:45 Speaker 2

How schools here work here in America and also I'm I'm very grateful for.

00:36:51 Speaker 2

For Alejandro's visit, I really I really want.

00:36:54 Speaker 2

You to express that.

00:36:56 Speaker 2

That gratitude, because it's it's really wonderful to have these opportunity.

00:37:02 Speaker 1

But we're very happy to have you both in the program Austina, and Alejandro.

00:37:05 Speaker 1

Thanks again so much for joining the podcast and for participating in classroom connection.

00:37:10 Speaker 2

Thank you.

00:37:11 Speaker 1

That's all the time we have today.

00:37:12 Speaker 1

Thanks again to our guests Alejandro and Augustina for joining and for all of the amazing classroom connection volunteers and teachers who bring the world to our classrooms.

00:37:21 Speaker 1

Thanks as well to all of the members and supporters of Global Minnesota who make these programs possible. Sure to check out our website at globalminnesota.org where you can find information about upcoming events.

00:37:31 Speaker 1

Learn more about our international programs and sign up for our weekly newsletter.

00:37:35 Speaker 1

Thanks for listening and we'll talk to you soon.