

We're Listening

In a tiny indigenous community in the mountains of Panama, live 8 boys under the age of eleven. They don't know about multimillion dollar stadiums, massive communication equipment or high priced sponsorships. They don't care about contracts or game politics and most of them have never even seen a TV. But these little boys have something that perhaps, in all the grandeur of the World Cup we have forgotten- an unadulterated love of the game.

In our community of 120 people, we have no roads, no electricity and no school within an hour. Many of my friends and neighbors have never seen a globe and therefore have a hard time understanding the world makeup. As luck would have it, I finished painting a world map in my community right as the World Cup started. The kids immediately took to it. They wanted to know where all of the World Cup participants were from. They came by everyday before the tournament started and practiced finding each country. We made a list of our top 3 countries that we wanted to win and posted it on my door next to the tournament schedule. As the games started, we colored flags from our favorite countries.

The day England played the US, I came home from my English class to every house with the radio on. Kids and adults had their ears all facing the little black box listening. I quickly went home and turned on my radio. England was up one. My boys came over and we all sat around my porch listening. Then we heard it" "GOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOL!" Everyone's eyes were huge. We stood frozen there looking at each other. Who? Goal by who?! LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS!!! ahhhhhhh! We jumped and screamed and ran around giving high fives and hugs. There was electricity in the air. People came out their houses and looked at me. We smiled at each other and acknowledged that yes-the US had tied England. I can't describe the excitement. The kids look at the world cup as such an amazing event. And they look at me as their link to a country that is there. So over the next month there we will be: my new best friends, a few boys, and I listening to a fuzzy sound coming from a tiny box in the middle of the jungle. This experience is irreplaceable.