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Harford County Public Schools Social Studies Teacher Selected for Immersion Experience in Latin America This Summer

Maura Viehl of Southampton Middle School will Spend Six Weeks in Cusco, Peru

Maura Viehl, Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) social studies teacher at Southampton Middle School, is one of 15 educators selected from Maryland, Ohio, Virginia, New York, North Carolina, Washington, and Washington D.C. to participate in a six-week immersion experience in Cusco, Peru.

Although several HCPS teachers have applied for this opportunity in years past, Ms. Viehl is the first from HCPS to be selected to participate in this program.

Ms. Viehl was chosen based on her letters of reference, previous study experiences, and responses to application and interview questions. She was tapped by HCPS Supervisor of Social Studies George Toepfer to apply for the opportunity.

From June 24 to August 5, 2017, she and the other educators – led by two Towson University faculty – will participate in language study, lectures, interviews, home stays, excursions, workshops and cultural activities as they explore issues central to Latin America. She will learn firsthand about the history, language, culture, geography, education, art and architecture, indigenous peoples, and modern Peru’s economy and society.

“This is truly one of the greatest opportunities of my career,” said Ms. Viehl.

This trip is made possible through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad program.

Dr. Ronn Pineo and Dr. Colleen Ebacher are the Towson University program co-directors who wrote the grant, and they will not only serve as the tour guides and instructors in Peru, but will also guide the educators as they create curriculum units for use in their classrooms and schools when they return to the United States.

Ms. Viehl gained travel experience while earning her undergraduate degree and in her early years of teaching at a private school. As an undergraduate at Concordia University in Nebraska, she went to London, Edinburgh, and Dublin on a two-week literary/history tour in 2004. She was also part of another Concordia study trip that took a three-week geography tour through the southwest United States and Hawaii in 2005. After her first year teaching, she partnered with a service group to take students to Costa Rica for two weeks in 2007. A year later, she and her students joined another service trip to Saltillo, Mexico.

During her upcoming time in Peru, Ms. Viehl will be living with host families.

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