

**LEARNING ENGLISH AS A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE THE COMPETITIVENESS FOR  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE TOURIST AND HOTEL MANAGEMENT  
INDUSTRY, CASE CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, USA**

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**UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA Y TECNOLÓGICA DE COLOMBIA**

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On our way to get essential achievements we always found who are by our side, to support us and remind us the way when we are lost. To them we owe what we are and what we achieve. So  
this project is dedicated to all of them in my life

## **GRATEFULNESS**

Through all this process I learned so many valuable things for in my life, I developed new skills, meet met amazing people, and I had personal and professional growth. This enriched my life in so many ways that I'm so thankful that I couldn't forget to thank all those who make part of this process. First I would like to thank to God who gave me the opportunity to live this experience, He directed my way and provided me patience, strength and wisdom to finish this process. To my dear parents Alba Marina Leon and Ely Silva, for their constant support and love in every moment, without them I wouldn't be what I am today. They believe and trust me and I hope I never disappoint them, to them is all of this.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Lately the world has become a place more open due to globalization, now people have the chance to travel, meet new cultures, have knowledge about what is happening around the world, and business more often happens between countries. Consequently the labor market has increased the demands in terms of skills to communicate, so now companies need professionals who are prepared to communicate in a second language as English since this is the international language for business.

For a hotel and tourism professional the communication skill is essential. This sector has been growing in the last years, so it needs to have professionals well prepared according to this progress. A hotel and tourism professional is constant communication with people from different cultures and people from different parts of the world, therefore it is indispensable to speak a second language to offer excellent service, and also this will provide to the professional a highest level of competitiveness to apply for a new job. However Colombia has a little numbers of professionals who really speak a second language. For this reason now professionals look for what it is the best way to learn a second language, but to acquire completely a second language is necessary be part of the culture. It is very difficult for a person who does not belong to the culture to understand correctly what it is say, so a way to improve a second language is living abroad. In fact, there are cultural exchange programs that allows students to get involved in the culture

of the host country, people who participate in these programs have the opportunity to travel, study, meet new people, and have a social and cultural knowledge through the participation of different activities which help the participants to understand and be fluent in a second language.

In this context it will be possible not only to learn what is taught in a classroom, but also learn the idioms, be fluent, and improve what it is already known. As a result the communication will be better, without misunderstandings because the person who participates in a cultural immersion will understand the second language.

The present project will show how a tourism and hotel management student took part of a cultural exchange program for two years in Chicago City, United States. Although the main goal for the student during this time was improve the English as a second language, at the same time the student lived multiple experiences with which acquired some benefits for the future. Through this time in Chicago the student made part of cultural and social events, worked as an Au Pair, took classes in Chicago's college, at the library, and in a Christian community, travelled around the country and finally did an investigation of one of the most important attractions of Chicago city. In all of these experiences the student had the opportunity to be part of the culture and practice the language improving skills like listening, speaking, and writing in English.

This project has four chapters that will describe the student's major every experiences in United States. The first chapter focuses in Cultural Exchanges, how the cultural exchanges programs work and the benefits to participating in these programs. The second

chapter describes how it is going through cultural exchange, the adaption process and what it feels like in the first months, also all the experiences that the student lived in the host country and how these experiences helped to improve English as a second language. The third chapter refers to the educational activities that facilitated to improve different skills in the language; these classes were taken in Chicago's college, and in others places which help to foreigners to improve the language. Finally the last chapter is to an investigation about one of the main attractions of Chicago city, the investigation includes a part of the history of the city, and how the city became in one of the greatest cities of the world after a big fire. After this incident the city began to rebuild, many architects had the chance to make a new city and this was for the development of American City as an architectural capital and showplace. Now it is a beautiful city with architectural wealth and big skyscrapers, where people can enjoy of the beauty of the skylines in Chicago. Chicago was the first city of the world with the tallest building in the world, and now has the second tallest skyscraper of the country The Willis Tower, it is one of the main attractions of the city and this attract thousands of tourists in the year.

Finally, after two years in United States and living all these experiences the student improved the English as a second language, and got other benefits from this like saving some money, know learning about different cultures, make friends, and finished with amazing memories.

## **2. CHAPTER 1:**

### **IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL EXCHANGES**

#### **2.1. Cultural Exchange.**

Actually globalization has imposed the need of being people with the ability of understand different situations and cultures, therefore having the experience of living abroad is a very useful tool for this need, due to the development of several professional and personal skills. According to UNESCO 1998 in order to increase the understanding and tolerance between different cultures, there is an agreement of the advantages of the socio-cultural exchanges that are achieved from this type of initiatives. So cultural exchanges provide the possibility of exposing a new culture living traditions and customs of the foreigner country. Most of the people who makes this cultural exchanges are in school and college's students which have different purposes like to learn or improve another language, travel, study, meet new people and different cultures, have new experiences and learn from these. People who have the opportunity to live a cultural exchange develop interpersonal skills, reduction of prejudices and stereotypes, interest in global phenomena, ability to compare different realities or social phenomena, greater orientation towards the international over the local. Also this experience can affect the different dimensions of human development - cognitive, social, affective, moral and physical (Fiocchi&Rojas, 2015). So people who participate in cultural exchanges get



new knowledge that makes a difference from the rest, they can assume the role of agents of social change and innovation in the future.

## **2.2.Cultural Exchange Programs**

In fact there are cultural exchange programs that allows young people have the opportunity to live this experience, these programs allows the participants to live in other country for a period of time and work in the foreigner country. According to the U.S. Bureau of Consular Affairs most of these exchange programs are geared toward students. In the programs, the exchange students have the opportunity to attend school and study what they prefer.

## **2.3.Benefits of cultural exchange:**

- ***Experience another cultures:*** The cultural exchanges exposes to the participants to live a variety of experiences in the host country. During the year the participants are exposed to share with new cultures and customs that enrich the experience, know about the different point of views, how things are done, or participating of cultural moments like festivities, sports events, dinners, traditions and at the same time know about the norms and values of this country. This allow the participant to be more tolerant and open mind.
- ***Increase social skills:*** Once the participants are living the experience it is essential for them start a social life. The first months participants need to know about the host country and friends can help with some tips to make easier the experience. Also it is a great

opportunity to make contacts with people from all over the world. This are contacts that the participants can keep and they can be an advantage for their lives.

- ***Improve the language:*** Living the cultural exchange it is the best way to learn or improve a language. It is an advantage because participants constantly are listening, speaking and practicing with natives, which means that they are learn idioms and colloquialism. Indeed participants will speak more fluently and sound more like natives.
- ***Study and Travel:*** Within the benefits of being in an international country is study in universities in the host country. Besides that, they can travel and see a bit more of the country
- ***Personal and professional growth:*** Participant's cultural exchange are in an international environment which can give them a new way to think about the world. The participants gain a broadest context for understand the global issues. At the same time they have to make the personal tasks and this make develop self-confidence and independence in becoming in a capable person.

#### **2.4.Requirements to Apply an Cultural Exchange**

One of the countries that support the International Cultural Exchanges Programs is United States. To participate in this programs is necessary holding a J-1 exchange visitor visa. To apply J-1 exchange visitor visa it is required reach a certified Host Company or institution that can support your stay in the United States. There are some companies who promote and support the cultural exchange, it can be a summer jobs, as an au pair,

training or internship programs. The J-1 exchange visitor visa has some benefits, the participant's Cultural Exchange programs can have access to a Social Security Number, a driver license, study in the colleges of United States, have access to health insurance, and also allow the participants work. People who apply to the J-1 exchange visitor visa have one year to stay in the host country, although it is possible to extend for one more year, in this case the support for the next year is the form DS-2019 (certificate of eligibility),

According to the Act Cultural Exchange and Mutual Education, the main goal if this kind of visa is promote a global understanding through the promotion and exchange of knowledge and skills who participate in cultural exchange program, so this benefits help to the participants to make easier their time in the host country and a get the most out of cultural exchanges.

### **3. CHAPTER II:**

#### **LIVING IN A CULTURAL EXCHANGE**

##### **3.1. Learn a Language through Cultural Immersion**

Recently the globalization and new technologies have made communication easier between us, consequently learning a second language has become necessary; especially English due to this is the business language. Therefore learning English is a big advantage to increase social skills and new opportunities to get better jobs. A fundamental tool to really understand and learn a language is a Cultural immersion, so having a knowledge of the culture through components like idioms, festivities, history, customs, and daily routines; allow to understand the language and use it in different and real contexts.

Take part of a Cultural Exchange Program is the opportunity to make a cultural immersion, who are in this programs have the chance to spend one year or more in the host country and share with natives living experiences that will help to learn language. In the Cultural Exchange Programs the participants will be forced to listen, speak and write the language in every moment. When they are working, studying and sharing with friends. Also they will have the opportunity to travel and attend to multiples events like sport games, birthdays, holidays that it will allow to improve the new language as it was mentioned.

### 3.1.1. Adjustment Process

Start the process for Cultural Exchange is exciting. Finally it achieves goals for an own benefit. The process for the application is hard and stressful because from the beginning participants have to face the language. To apply they have to start filling up documents in English and face the language through interviews with natives. It is not easy and everything is not that fast, it takes time, but this process is about to be constant and achieve the goals that each one proposes. Once the application process is done, it is time to leave home for live this experience, face the unknown and leave the comfort zone. Although it is satisfying, it is really scary. First months participants have to deal with some situations of adjustment and immersion.

**3.1.1.1.Cultural:** Live with people that has habits and customs totally different , some of these habits or customs for the persons sometimes can be insolences, but the time helps to realize that it is just cultural, it is their way of being; what for some people can be an insolence, rarely or differently, for them not. Americans are welcoming, tolerant and open-mind. Although the cultural perception the first months can be different, sometimes depends of the city where the participants are. In little cities, the people don't usually deal with people who don't speak English, so sometimes the people is not open mind enough for try to keep a conversation, even others participants who also are in the cultural exchange and are almost ending up their year or who already speak English. But most of people who are directly related with the participants are very

understanding and patience with the language and culture, besides sometimes the companies help with this process making awareness in the direction of cultural differences and the language.

**3.1.1.2. *Language:*** First months are very shameful, and it is common make mistakes when natives are trying to have a conversation, usually participants don't have a broad vocabulary or they are not fluent when they arrive. It is frustrating when natives are trying to begin a conversation and don't understand what they are saying, or even trying speak to them and don't know what words use. But in the host country it is indispensable for the participants to communicate due to environment, job, school and social life, and with the time the frustration and shame don't matter.

It is very helpful during the adjustment stage to listen and watch music videos, specially this videos that have lyrics on it and songs for kids, repeat and sing the songs, watch movies that have already been seen, read specially magazines where there are a lot of idioms that the participants can learn and use them when they are in a conversation, ask when there are doubts without be afraid of make a mistake, natives don't care about how good the participant's language is or how many mistakes they have. Some of them help a lot learning the new language. To be fluent it is important listen how the natives speak, in the restaurant, at the park, at the library, etc.

**3.1.1.3. *Homesick:*** As it was mention it is hard leave family, friends and the comfort zone. A new place might feel very unfamiliar and It feels lonely and sadness, although it is

normal to have homesick, miss family, places and even the bed, but It helps to make a bucket list, explore the place around, make friends at work, at school or attend to activities with groups for example walk, dance, work out it is the best way to start feeling better in a host country. Once a routine is established it feels better. At the beginning participants can have a mixed of feelings like sadness, out of space, frustrated, and embarrassment when they are trying to have a conversation because they cannot understand the language and what is happening around. However it takes some months this adjustment process, but once it has passed through, the cultural immersion experience is extraordinary. Being in Cultural Exchange in United States can offers a big cultural enrichment, travel to so many places, make new friends, but also learn and really understand the language.

### **3.1.2. New Experiences:**

Once the adjustment process was over participants begin to have a broader perspective of the culture and habits of American culture; due to they have gone through experiences that help them to learn English, but It is not just learn the language it is understand the language in every context because it is very different learn a language in a classroom where is taught grammar or how write it or pronounce it, but not the way to interpret it. So after a while participants start to make a social life, which allow them to start feel comfortable with the environment and live different experiences like planning trips, go to a concert, celebrate festivities, go to games, go to museums, have dinners, go to the library etc. All of this situations will help participants not only to improve the language with expressions, idioms, and have a broader vocabulary, but also to understand the different accents, as well as have a cultural enrichment since the population of United States is made up with natives and people from different parts of the world. This make of USA a cultural diversity country.

## **3.2. Activities to improve English:**

### **3.2.1. Sports:**

Since Americans have chosen a healthy lifestyle part of his time is for do some kind of exercise like running, walking, jogging, go to the gym or play some sport. Also for Americans is very important the sports games or keep informative about what is happening with their favorite team. Though in United States play a lot sports the most popular to see and play are:



- Football:** Football is and of the most popular games in Unite States.

Americans meet at local bar, in a house for watch the game or outside of the stadiums making a BBQ sharing some beers.
- Baseball:** The second popular game in United States. Each game is played in the evenings, which becomes in a space for picnics and share with families.

Share the celebration when one of the teams won it is great, it almost looks like a Colombian celebration when a soccer team win. This day everyone look so happy, wearing the shirt, Cities in Downtown had representative equalizer lights, and bars full of people celebrating with beer.

**Picture 1: Wrigley Field**



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Wrigley Field, 2017). Chicago, Illinois

- **Basketball:** It is one of the most exciting sports in United States. The teams of this game bring a lot of fans on this days. Being in one of the games of the Chicago Bulls is one of the most exciting experiences. Between every break is a shows where the people participle in raffles and other activities as races or throw the ball. Also in the shows there is some performances for keep the people focus on the game. Although the tickets for a game are expensive, it worth it watch the game.

**Picture 2 United Center, Basketball**



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (United Center, 2016). Chicago, Illinois

- **Hockey:** It is not that popular as the last sports but American show some interest in this game. It has the same rudeness as football and usually kids training a lot this sport

### 3.2.2. Holidays and Celebrations:

Americans are more organized and uncomplicated when they want to celebrate, generally on holidays there are parades, fireworks, and concerts in different places, in addition the food and the beer is a fundamental part of celebrations. Every state of the United States has its festivals and events to celebrate. But this country has some festivities and celebrations that are the most outdated and has its own traditions.

- **Valentine's Day:** This celebration is on February 14th and the lovers usually share this day together. But this day is not just for lovers, also is for show love between families and friends. It is not a holiday though, but this is one of the most famous and important festivities of USA.
- **Saint Patrick's Day:** On March 17th, it is an Irish commemoration of the death of Saint Patrick. But with the time the Irish immigrants has expanded this tradition all over the world. Some cities like Chicago this day is special, due to the Chicago River is dyer green for the day, and is a big event that is very recognized in USA. Also in the locals bars the beer is tinted of green, and people has to wear something green or somebody can pinch you. There is many parades in the suburbs but the major parade is the downtown.

**Picture 3: saint Patrick's Day**



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Chicago River, 2016). Chicago, Illinois

- **Easter:** Although this is not holiday in United States is a very popular celebration, this celebration symbolized the Jesus Christ's resurrection. On this day the focus are the children, so the families meet for paint and decorate eggs, or they hide some eggs to be found. It is very common too give some presents into the family most of the time are chocolates shaped like a rabbit, many candies and kids can get some toy.

***Picture 4: Host Kid, Easter.***



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Omaha, 2016). Omaha, Nebraska

- ***Fourth of July - United States Independence Day:*** This is one of the most important holidays in this country. As always the families and friends meet in the afternoons for make a picnic or have a barbecues in the backyard of their homes. After this most of them like to watch the parades, concerts and fireworks performed in different places. People put the flag in their houses, and wear clothes with the colors of the flag. In the cities the buildings in downtown put lights with

the colors of the flag and there is a big recognized show of fireworks which is much crowded.

**Picture 5: Downtown Chicago, Fourth of July**



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Downtown Chicago, 2016). Lighting of the city. Chicago, Illinois

- **Halloween's day:** This is one of the biggest celebration in USA, even bigger than Christmas, though is not an official holiday either. Some houses start to be decorated in September, and you can find your costume since then. One of the tradition more representative of this holiday are the pumpkins, Americans carve



the pumpkins, make faces on it and put it in the front door of their houses as decoration. Also the haunted houses are very popular between youth and adults, and you can find it in each state of USA. The farms for families start to open in this month, and usually have Halloween activities for enjoy. Finally as in others countries the day is October 31. On this day the children dress up with their customs to knock the neighbor's door saying trick-or-treat, families have a basket with candies for them, and for youth and adults there are so many parties where they can participate in competitions to the best costume.

**Picture 6: Decoration Pumpkins**



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Omaha, 2015). Decoration pumpkins. Omaha, Nebraska.

*Picture 7: Haunted House*



*[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Haunted house, 2016). Chicago, Illinois.*

- **Thanksgiving:** This is an official holiday in this country on the fourth Thursday of November. At first, thanksgiving is a day for give thanks for all what they have. All the schools are close and most of the Americans don't work on this day. The families come together to have dinner where the main meal is roast turkey, they also have traditional meals as potatoes, pumpkin pie, and vegetables, also include many desserts. Besides they play games where sometimes you can find prizes. In some cities there are also some parades. Finally, after thanksgivings'



day is Black Friday which is a day where all the electronics stores has big discounts in their products.

**Picture 8: Thanks Giving Celebration**



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Hratinsky's Home, 2016).Chicago, Illinois.

- **Christmas:** As usual the families come together to have a meal, but the focus on this day are the children. Although the families share some gifts, the effort is in the gifts that are given to the children who make a letter for the figure of Christmas Santa Claus. The gifts are open on December 25<sup>th</sup> in the morning. The decoration for Christmas also appear since early like September. The houses are

decorate inside with the most traditional the three, something that is very representative in this holiday is the snow.

***Picture 9: Christmas Decoration in Columbus***



*[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Christmas in Columbus, 2016). Columbus, Ohio*

- **New Year:** This day is mostly for parties. So the youth people usually are in bars celebrating this day. But at the same time some families like share some dinner. On this day the most popular event is watch the ball drop in New York City. This day in New York is chaotic, there are a thousands of people trying to get into this event, and even they wait there from 9:00 am. This event is in Times Squares and the streets are close by 3:00 the people who wait there form the 9:00 am are the luckiest due to the streets are full and if you are back you don't see the big performance with the artists just the ball fall. Anyways this is one of the experience that the people who visit USA cannot lost.

**Picture 10: Celebration New Year's Eve**



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (New Year's Eve, 2016). Times Square, New York.

### 3.2.3. Activities with seasons

United States has variety of seasons, on West side can be warm, on South side is very hot with a lot of storms, and East and North is where you can find the seasons, spring, summer, fall and winter. In every season there are a lot activities for have fun or simply enjoy the landscapes that the seasons offer to see

- **Spring:** 10 – 15°C. From March to the last days of May. Although the weather start to be warmer somedays can snow too. This season it rains a lot and leafs in

the trees start to grow which is beautiful to see. This is one of the best season for running. Also is when the season most of for games start.

- **Summer:** 22 – 34°C. From June to Middle of September. Summer is the favorite season for Americans because is time for vacation, the days are longer, and the colors of the trees and flowers make everything look prettier. Besides summer is the season whit more events and activities in downtown and the suburbs where the people can enjoy like fairs which is a perfect space to meet people and practice. The public's pools and other parks are open.

**Picture 11: Lake Geneva with Hrantinski Family**



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (summer in boat, 2016).Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

- **Fall:** 19 – 10° C From the last days of September to the middle of November. Although the weather start to be cold. This season offers the most spectacular landscapes, the trees start to change their color, leafs start to fall and the sunsets are awesome. There are still some good events in the cities and farms open to offers many ‘familiar activities, the most popular is picking up apples.

**Picture 12: Host Kids at the Farm**



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Barrington's Farm, 2016).Chicago, Illinois.

- **Winter:** 8°-15°C. From Last days of November to First days of March. The longest season in United States. Start to snow in the first days of December which



is very beautiful to see usually drinking a hot chocolate. But after a while is maddening because you just can be at home. However there are some activities that Americans do in this season like make a snow angel, build a snowman, go slide in the small mountains and snow sculpture competitions.

**Picture 13: Sculpture Snow**



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Sculpture Snow, 2016). Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

### 3.2.4. Traveling Into United States

One of the benefits to do a cultural exchange is being able to travel into the country. This is one of the most useful ways to have a cultural enrichment, and make unforgettable memories with different moments lived on trips. Furthermore to improve and practice the language because the main language is English, so travel in a country that is unknown makes speaking essential, for ask about places, at the airports, at the hotels, when it is time to order in the restaurant. But also it will help with listening from natives and from foreign which is much better because it will better for understand accents.

- ***Indiana***

*South Bend:* This is a little city in Indiana's state located a short 90 miles east of Chicago, South Bend/Mishawaka is rich in culture, heritage. (City of South Bend, 2017.) In this city is popular the University of Notre Dame, which has a very big campus and into this it can see the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes and the Sacred Heart Church Both of them with many history and very beautiful paints. Also in this it can see the little zoo Potawatomi Zoo.

*Indianapolis:* It is the twelfth largest city, it is home of 1.6 million of people and host 18 million visitors each year. Actually it is intersected by more highways than any other American City Indianapolis has earned the nickname Crossroads of America. Each year in May the Indianapolis 500 draws thousands of racing to the Indiana Motor Speedway. Also many buildings in Indianapolis's oldest neighborhood, for example the Lockerbie

Square date from the late 1800. (Lloyd, 2014). The place Visited in this trip was The Indianapolis Children's Museum. It is the largest museum children's museums in the world.

***Picture 14: Host Kid in Indianapolis***



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Host Kid Downtown, 2016). Indianapolis, Indiana.

- ***The Southwest and California:*** This trip was made in the first week of vacation in a road trip with the company tour4fun. This company offers this tour for eight days, with hotel, and transportation. This tour was made in the state of California and the southwest of USA. Although it was a short trip for each city, it was a very pleasant trip and full of very good memories of each city.



## California

*Los Angeles (LA)*: In California this was the first city to visit. This city is well known for over the world for being a paradise with respect to the weather. Also is the city of the entertainment with more of 100 museums, the Walk of Fame's collection of stars, the Hollywood sign, Disneyland, and the neighborhood where lives the famous celebrities Beverly Hills. The places visited into the city were The Walk of fame and the Hollywood Sign. The Walk of fame is a long street with the name of the celebrities most recognize, but also in this street you can find the print of foods with the signs of some celebrities like Will Smith, Michael Jackson, Harry Potter, etc. Into the Street of The Walk of Fame is the museum of Madame Tussauds Hollywood, where you can see the wax sculptures of different celebrities and movie characters. The Hollywood sign which is very popular and it can be seen from a long distance, though now is not easy get too close to the sign.

**Picture 15: Walk of Fame**



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Walk of Fame, 2016). Los Angeles, California.

*Santa Barbara:* This city is between Los Angeles and San Francisco is a modestly sized city. Clean and sandy beaches. Santa Barbara is low-slung Spanish Revival buildings featured red-tiled roofs

*Monterey Bay:* Named by Spanish merchant, the bay is south of the major cities of San Francisco and San Jose, (Monterey, 2017). One of the places visited by this bay was the Pebble Beach. The Beach has been a tourist destination since the early twentieth century, also recognize for the high prices of the houses, the outstanding natural beauty and elegance and popular between golfers. (Tripsavvy, 2017).

*San Francisco:* San Francisco is a cosmopolitan city located in northern of California, it is one of the cities with more diverse of population has one of the nation's largest Asian communities, and a significant gay/lesbian community. (Citytowninfo, 2017). Although It was just one day in this city, one day is enough for realize that this city is one of the most beautiful cities. Its steep streets and the views from the top, its cable cars transportation, definitely makes a different experience. The places visited into this city were the Golden Gate Bridge, which is very famous and cab be cross by bicycle, a very wonderful icon to see of this city. Pier 39 where you can see the Alcatraz prison, the sea lions and the fisherman's wharfs, there you can find a lot restaurants with sea food, it is like a market but with restaurants, delicious. The next place were The Lombard street and garden which is a street where it is a little bit to drive due to is narrow and has many curves, many people wants drive down the street. But at the same time through the street you can see a beautiful garden which makes this place more interesting. The las place where the Union square which is the most important square in San Francisco.

**Picture 16: Lombard Street and Gardens**



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Lombard Street and Gardens, 2016).San Francisco, California.

*Yosemite National Park:* This was the first federal park in USA. Although the valley had been discovered only a few years earlier, its beautiful landscape were rapidly attracting for more people. The views of the Yosemite Valley and of the wilderness land of the high country beyond it is one of the greatest natural wonders of North America. (Schffer, 2007). In this park you can find waterfalls, stark granite, alpine lakes, pristine meadows, giant sequoia trees and ranging rivers. But the most famous of this park are the waterfall which are among the tallest in the world, and the giant sequoia trees. (Brown, 2015). Although it was little time to visit the place, it

was very magic watch its big falls and its landscape. It is place that needs at least one week for to see it very well and to take more pleasant memories.

**Picture 17: Friends at Yosemite National Park**



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Yosemite National Park, 2016). Los Angeles, California.

## **The Southwest**

*Las Vegas:* The city of the entertainment. This spectacular city is located in the Mojave Desert of Southern Nevada, in the largest city in the state. Las Vegas were a stop point for settlers on their way to California, but in 1931 when gambling became legal in Nevada. Now Las Vegas has more hotel rooms than any city in the world and the largest hotels too. (Citytowninfo, 2017). A city with so many beautiful lights, things to do and things to see, that really makes you wish live in there. The main attractions from this city can be visited walking. Almost every hotel has something to see inside like the hotel that inside look like Venice and people can take the boats too, and where look like never become night, or the hotels that has Flamingos inside. The city's

structure represents some of the popular places in the world like The Eiffel Tower, The Triumphal Arch or the Statue of Liberty. This city is also visited for many people, so in this city you can see people from different parts of the world. Also the city has a show in different places an example of this is the water's show and the fire's show that the visitors can see for free.

**Picture 18: Las Vegas**



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Las Vegas, 2016). Las Vegas, Nevada.

*The Grand Canyon:* The Grand Canyon is a mile-deep canyon (1.6 km) that bisects the park, it takes 5 hours to drive the 215 miles / South Rim Village and the North Rim Village. The canyon's diverse environments, from low desert to montane forest support more than 2000



species of plants, mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians. The landscapes are beautiful with the spectrum of red, orange and gray. There rocks along that are 2 billion years old. The canyon is 5 or 6 million of years old. There are two ways to see the Grand Canyon the South Rim and the North Rim. The South Rim is the most visited due to offer views its maze of tributaries, monuments, and rivers. And the North Rim is inaccessible in winter due to heavy snow. (Bryant, 2011). If people wants to really enjoy if this place totally it should take at least two days for take the time to hiking. But

**Picture 19: Grand Canyon**

although one hour is not enough for look the place very well, it is enough for be surprised by its beauty-



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (The South Rim,2016) Grand Canyon, Arizona.

*Michigan:* It is well known as the Great Lakes State. Michigan is set off from much of the country by water, four of the great lakes surround it. Today travelers search the state over for a bit of their own sand and surf. (Dufresne, 2009).

*Florida – Miami:* This city is a wildly diverse districts, jig sawed into a vast urban corridor from two technically separate cities. Miami has gained a reputation as one of the foremost centers for contemporary art in USA. Also Miami is very diverse, where the most of the population are Hispanics especially from Cuba. (Bramson, 2011).

**Picture 20: Fiends at Miami**



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Downtown, 2016)Miami, Florida.

- **Ohio:**

*Cleveland:* Actually Cleveland is a modern city. There are numerous universities and grad schools. It is modest in size. But this city is fantastic place to get a groove on due to have a multitude of live-music venues. Cleveland is popular because is the city that always will be the rock and roll town. (Trattner, 2009)

*Columbus:* It is the fifteen large city of USA. Columbus has one skyline

*Ash Cave:* This cave is in the Hocking Hills State Park, the park is a natural area that include caves, gorges. It can be access by hiking trails and state roads. One of the most popular caves is Ash Cave. (Loewendick, 2016)

**Picture 21: Ash Cave**



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Ash Cave, 2017), Ohio.



- **Northeastern**

*Washington:* This is the American city. It was the first modern city built for be the national capital. In 1790 George Washington picked the spot for the capital, and Virginia and Maryland ceded parts of their state territory for the site aside as the District of Columbia DC. The architectural styles adopted over two centuries are a mirror of changing official taste, from Greek and Roman to contemporary steel and glass. (Gostelow and Scott, 2016).

**Picture 22: Washington D, C**



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (National mall, 2016) Washington D.C.

*Boston:* Although is a small city this city usually is one of the best cities for live. Boston offers a wealth of attractions that draw visitors from over the world (Timeout, 2016).

*New York:* One of the biggest cities of United States, also one of the most multicultural, there people are talking always in diverse language. New York is where the tourists can find the most representative of USA, the statue of Liberty and Time Square.

**Picture 23: New York**



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Manhattan, 2016) New York, NY.

*Niagara's fall:* It is a group of waterfalls and one of the biggest in the world. This beautiful place is located in the North of United States, limit with Canada that also has part of this group of waterfalls. At the nights the Niagara's fall are illuminated with colorful light which make them look gorgeous, and in the background you see the city of

Toronto (Canada). During the day is admirable to see how big this are and the force of the water. Niagara's fall is one of the places more visited of United States due to is a magnificent place to see and it has been made known through movies, so many people from different countries come to see them. This place has some tourist plans that allow see them closely, like boats or walk trough of a cave found it down of the waterfalls.

*Picture 24: Night in Niagara's fall*



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Niagara's fall, 2017)Buffalo, NY.

- **Puerto Rico:** An island located at northeast of United States, this island has an excessive tourist potential in a little space. It has natural attractions, beaches, tropical forests,

mountains; cultural richness history, food, architecture, but also most of the time it has a wonderful tropical weather, that's why people who live in the north side of United States where the weather is cold prefer visit Puerto Rico in the coldest months. The first language most spoken in Puerto Rico is Spanish, but the second is English, so most of the youngest population is bilingual, which is a big advantage for them because of the tourism.

***Picture 25: Puerto Rico***



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Mar Chiquita Beach, 2017) Puerto Rico.



**3.2.5. Recreational Activities:** During the cultural exchange year participants can make part of others activities which contribute to expand the vocabulary, as it was mentioned go to the museums, go to watch movies, make crafts with natives or cook with them which required in many time read, the informative sign, or listen the information, or ask for some suggestions.

*Picture 26: At Legoland with Host Kid*



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Legoland, 2016) Chicago, Illinois.

As it was mentioned big cities in United States multicultural and multiracial, so most of the foreigners that live in United States are from Mexico, Poland and India. However the predominant language is the American English (Hargraves, 2011). Live in USA has

some advantages when it comes to improve the language. First at all this cities has a variety of accents and natives spoke really fast whereby sometimes it is hard to understand. But this help to improve the listening. Secondly, in this kind of cities are more open mind to people who don't speak, so when they realize that you don't speak they don't go away on the contrary the don't care about it and sometimes they are very friendly and help you with the pronunciation or with the correct spell.

#### **4. CHAPTER III:**

#### **TOOLS FOR IMPROVE ENGLISH SKILLS**

The main objective of cultural exchange was improve skills in English. Once the exchange is done there are some ways to improve English skills. A participant of a cultural exchange has the opportunity of further the education through take a number of credits in USA, as a residence of United States you have the opportunity to attend to ESL (English as a Second Language) and classes and activities for free. The classes and activities were taking at Harper College, Schaumburg Library and Christ Community Mennonite Church.

##### **4.1.Harper College:**

Harper College is a community colleges and one of the largest in Chicago's northwest suburbs. The College's academic programs prepare students for rewarding careers and for transfer to four-year universities. Harper offers associate degree and certification programs, advanced career programs, workforce training, professional development, continuing education classes, accelerated degree options for adults and developmental education programs. (Harpercollege, 2017).

#### 4.1.1. English as a Second Language Program in Harper College:

To start in this college has to take a look of which is the level of English that the person has, so first the college star with a test. This involves a writing and a listening part; after this the college give the results and depends on this they suggest which classes the persons should takes. This college has a level for each aspect in English, writing, grammar, and reading, each one has a level from me to V, so for each there are classes. Besides the have classes for vocabulary, pronounce and communicate. In this case the classes taking were:

- **Writing III:** To start with a level of writing III a course for intermediate level. This course was emphasized to develop the skills in writing and editing skills. This course were giving twice per week for two hours for four months. This skills were develop through individual and group exercises, the purpose of this exercises were to improve skills on grammar, vocabulary, editing, and organization. So every class the teacher explained the topic, and after that she made to develop exercises for participate in class or in group which was very good because classmates were from other countries, then this helped with listening. The way to evaluate this class was through Quizzes and exams of editing, paragraphs making in and out of class and one final exam which showed if it had improved the skills in writing. At the end of the period some of the classmate manifested to improve the way to editing and with vocabulary which was very helpful in their jobs.



In this case, it was easier write a complete text; having a new knowledge on structure, connectors, vocabulary and verb tenses.

- ***Conversation VI:*** This course were focus on develop the skills on conversation, this class were concentrate in be more active. This class were twice per week two hours for four months. The conversation skills were develop through activities like work in groups, class discussions, role plays, presentations, work at home, and speeches. As it was important to speak, it was important to listen. For the teacher is one of the big ways to learn English. For each class it was a different activity. The teacher always explain words, expressions that the students didn't understand from an article that everyone have to read aloud, and she corrected one by one the pronunciation. In each class everybody had to talk. Nobody could be quiet. The classmates in this class were from all over the world but specially Asians people. Finally the way of evaluate this class were through active participation, vocabulary test, and presentation. There was a big final presentation which required the material seem during the course. In this case it was very useful with some words that it wasn't understand and with be more confident to talk to somebody else.
- ***Core Languages Skills V:*** The focus in this course were develop skills on three levels, writing, speaking, and grammar. This class were twice per week, two hours for four months. This Skills were develop through activities like, work in groups, reading, role

plays, presentations, games and listening. This class was focus on how to use the verbal times, and some auxiliaries like must, should, etc. But also in speaking with speeches. Listening was essential in every speech, because in this class there were people from different part of the world. For evaluate this class were through, test, the presentations, homework done in home, and the final test which include all the topics seen in the class.

## **4.2.Schaumburg Township District Library:**

Every suburb in Chicago has a public library. In this case the Schaumburg Township District Library, this library is one of largest libraries in Illinois. Furthermore offers different activities where the people can attend for free like classes, movies, educational talks, crafts, and history time for everyone families, kids, youth and adults.

### **4.2.1. Program English as a Second Language:**

This classes are made for people who don't speak English and want to improve it. Who attend to this classes are foreigners that want to get a job or be promoted, but some just want to improve it. This classes are offers at the libraries in each suburb, for two hours one day per month. To participate in this classes it is necessary register yourself and live in the suburb. Libraries offer several classes and in every season there are classes. The classes' offers for the library are:

- Intermediate ESL
- Conversation Clubs

- Reading
- ESL book discussions
- Online sessions
- Read to learn

Also the libraries help to prepare for the exam and interview for the citizenship for free and some classes are focus for elders.

#### ***4.2.1.1.Conversation Club:***

This was a class whose main objective was to improve communicative skills. So this class was divide in three parts. The first part was about a presentation which showed some new vocabulary and at the same time teach some new topics. The second part was reading and pronunciation, always the teacher brought an article and each student read a paragraph. The third part was to interact, in this part usually were activities like games or make histories. The class was once per week two hours in the mornings. This class was not evaluative it was only about will.

#### **4.3.Christ Community Mennonite Church:**

It is a Christian church that offers different activities for the community, one of this activities are classes for people who wants to improve their skills in English. The classes voluntarily are guided for the Pastor of the Church Amy Aschliman who has a master in teaching English and Special Education. She spent 6 years as a literacy educator in

Chicago Public Schools and City Colleges of Chicago. For this classes it is not necessary live in the suburb, it is voluntary who wants to improve and meet new people. Also to this class attend some natives that help with the expression and unknown vocabulary. This class is once per week in the afternoons and as the library class is not evaluative is voluntary.

The skills develop in this class are reading, listening and speaking. The class have three parts first it is reading, articles which help with reading comprehension and new vocabulary and discuss it, listening, the second is the listening where she play music or some videos with different topics, where participants can complete the song or interpret it. The last is Table games, where everyone has to participate in class, it is very distressful and it helps a lot and you can practice. This kind of classes are very helpful with foreigners that don't have enough money to pay a class in a college or don't have time to attend during the day.

## 5. CHAPTER IV:

### CHICAGO RESEARCH

One of the objectives of this project was make a research about recreations, cultural or tourist topics in Chicago's city, and through these researches improve the language skills like writing, fluency and understanding. Once the student began to be familiar with the city and the language she visited some of the city's tourist attractions. Walking around the tourist attractions of the city she could notice how the city took breath away from many tourist for the beauty in its architecture, the river, Lake Michigan, The Loop, too many museums to go, the city's skyline, etc. There were too many attractions to see and to know about it, but one of the tourist attractions that draw the student's attention was the Skyscrapers of the city, particularly the Willis tower. First at all because it is remarkable how after a big disaster the city progressed and became in the first city with skyscrapers making part of this the Willis Tower. Besides of the amazing architecture that the city has. Secondly, Willis Tower has some records, it is the biggest city's skyscraper, the second biggest in the country, and it was the biggest of the world. Finally, Willis Tower has a sky deck in the last floors. On the way there people find information about the city and Willis tower, it works as a museum too. The Sky deck has some glass platforms where people can have a great view of the city, Lake Michigan, and four states more. Consequently the history architecture of Willis Tower and its Sky deck attract too many tourists every day turning it into one of the most popular attractions of the city.

To know more about The Willis Tower, its sky deck and improve the language; the student had to use different strategies. She had to visit Willis Tower, she talked with other visitors from other parts of the world, that were very excited to get to the Sky deck, On the way she had to listen and read about the history and other information about the tower as well as the city. Furthermore she had to complete the research through the library and websites that help to recollect all the information and see the Willis tower's importance for the city. As a result, the student shows how Chicago change through the years, how after a disaster became in the city with the largest skyscrapers in the world, and also how is one of the most important touristic attractions due to the Willis tower's structure since it was very difficult build the tower for the force of the wind in the city, and why people wants visit the tower.

### **5.1.CHICAGO**

Chicago is the third city with more population after New York and Los Angeles and it is recognize as one of the favorite destinations to visit of the world. Frequently millions of people visit Chicago each year. But one of the most visited attractions of this city is the metropolitan area which is well known for the beautiful environment that offers due to its architecture and skyscrapers.

This environment appeared after the fire of 1871. The fire began in the night and spread swiftly because of the warm, dry weather, and mostly of the constructions in Chicago were in wood. It destroyed the whole downtown. After two days a rainstorm ended the fire leaving

300 people died. 100.000 homeless, and 18.000 buildings were leveled. The fire just lefts standing the Limestone Water Tower and the Pumping Station. Apparently there was a man named Peg Leg Sullivan who started the fire when he was at the barn tending to his mother's cow, which also stayed there. (Drake, 2011). Instead of became in a city abandoned due to what happened Chicago knew how pull through quickly. After the fire many architects arrived from around of the world with the aim to rebuild Chicago. The Architects had the opportunity to design a new city, as a result the fire led to Chicago's title as the birth place of the skyscraper, so initially in 1885 the first skyscraper in Chicago was build, the Home Insurance Company. In 1893 Chicago was sealed with the opening of the Columbian Exposition as the World City. After this the Chicago Plan was published, this was for the development of American City as an architectural capital and showplace. The plan called for the beatification of the city through the buildings of parks and recreational spaces of the city. Now Chicago remains today a mecca of modern architectural monuments with many noted historical and contemporary buildings. (Hargraves, 2011). This city is the center of the architectural creativity since some architects have bring their best ideas for be developed here. Actually when people visit Chicago have many changes this creativity in different seats like the elegant hotels, parks, public spaces, museums and the skyscrapers where this research focuses, especially in the Willis Towers. The second Tower tallest in USA.

## **5.2.Skyscrapers in Chicago**

After the huge fire that Chicago had, the city focused on recovering quickly, and many architects saw the opportunity to set up a great city. Since 1884 Chicago began the construction of the tall buildings along with New York. In fact, although New York has the tallest skyscrapers in United States, Chicago has the title of the city where the skyscrapers were born. As we know Chicago started to build the skyscrapers as a restoration to the huge fire, so instead of wood, the new buildings were made largely of stone, iron and steel, a relatively new material. Furthermore one of the factors that help to set up the skyscrapers in Chicago was the advancement of technology with new inventions such as electric lighting and elevators. The first skyscraper was the Home Insurance Building, it was the first skyscrapers in the world with 138 feet tall and it was open in 1884, although this building was demolished in 1931 for set up a new skyscraper, the Field Building, now known as the LaSalle Bank Building. (History, 2015). The concentration of skyscrapers in Chicago are in the financial district, and were product of Chicago School of Architecture. Afterwards during the 20<sup>th</sup> century Chicago was having an economic and population growth, as a result it was necessary to create new spaces with the construction of new skyscrapers which was easier due to development of engineering techniques (Kiprop, 2017).

In the most recent years, the construction of skyscrapers has being thriving, therefore now Asian countries like United Arab Emirates or China have the tallest skyscrapers in the world, leaving to Chicago in the fourteenth ranking of the tallest skyscrapers according with the Skyscraper Center. Although United States is one of the countries that has more skyscrapers, being Chicago the fourth city with 312 of them (Philjake, 2017).



*Table 1: Tallest Completed Buildings in the World*

#	BUILDING NAME	CITY	FLOORS	COMPLETED	USE
<b>1</b>	Burj Khalifa	Dubai (AE)	163	2010	office / residential / hotel
<b>2</b>	Shanghai Tower	Shanghai (CN)	128	2015	hotel / office
<b>3</b>	Makkah Royal Clock Tower	Mecca (SA)	120	2012	other / hotel
<b>4</b>	Ping An Finance Center	Shenzhen (CN)	115	2017	Office
<b>5</b>	Lotte World Tower	Seoul (KR)	123	2017	hotel / office

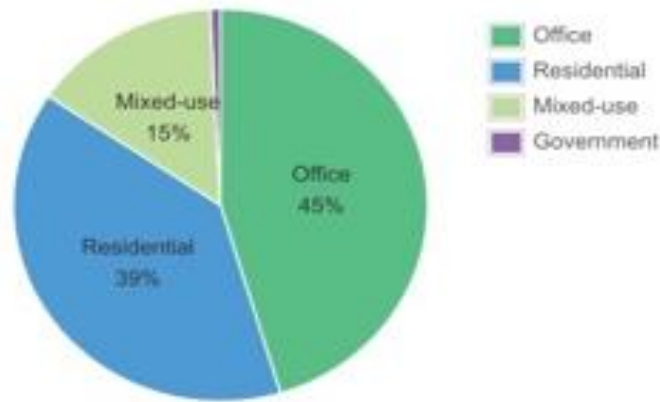
<b>6</b>	One World Trade Center	New York City (US)	94	2014	Office
<b>7</b>	Guangzhou CTF Finance Centre	Guangzhou (CN)	111	2016	hotel / residential / office
<b>8</b>	TAIPEI 101	Taipei (TW)	101	2004	Office
<b>9</b>	Shanghai World Financial Center	Shanghai (CN)	101	2008	hotel / office
<b>10</b>	International Commerce Centre	Hong Kong (CN)	108	2010	hotel / office

<b>11</b>	Petronas Twin Tower 1	Kuala Lumpur (MY)	88	1998	Office
<b>11</b>	Petronas Twin Tower 2	Kuala Lumpur (MY)	88	1998	Office
<b>13</b>	Zifeng Tower	Nanjing (CN)	66	2010	hotel / office
<b>14</b>	<b>Willis Tower</b>	<b>Chicago (US)</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>1974</b>	<b>Office</b>

The Skyscraper Center, (2018). 100 Tallest Completed Buildings in the World by Height to Architectural Top [Table]  
Referenced from <http://www.skyscrapercenter.com/buildings>

As we have observed the construction of skyscrapers in Chicago and in the world has been given for the necessity of create new spaces due to the growth of the population and the economy. The function that has been given to the skyscrapers has been different, in the previous table it can be observed that this function goes from office, hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions. In this case the function that Chicago has given to the skyscrapers can be appreciated in the next data provided by the Skyscraper center:

*Figure 1: Function of Skyscrapers in Chicago*



Skyscrapers center. (2018). Function skyscraper in Chicago [Graphic]. Referenced from: <http://www.skyscrapercenter.com/building/willis-tower/169>

As the place of birth of the skyscraper Chicago has taken advantage of the beauty in the architecture and the views that this offers. In fact Chicago developed The Chicago Architecture Foundation (CAF) which is a nonprofit cultural organization founded in 1966, CAF is dedicated to appreciate the architectural legacy and enhancing the awareness about it. Actually the CAF has grown and it is one of the largest cultural organizations in Chicago. This organization offers exhibitions, programs, events and tours. There are 85 tours and it can be by boat, walking, bus, or train. Tours are run by teachers who receive long hours training. The most known tour is the boat tour, it is recognize number ten in TripAdvisor for many travelers. The architecture of skyscrapers are the focus. (Chicago Architecture Foundation, 2017). Lately many people visited Chicago mainly for look the beauty architecture or views that skyscrapers offers, therefore they

looks for the best spaces for take a good picture or just admire the city. There are some skyscrapers where the people can get to see the best views of Chicago. According to Choose Chicago the official tourism organization for the city, there are three iconic skyscrapers where you can see the view of the city and the most visited.

**5.2.1. Trump International Hotel and Tower Chicago:** Trump announced that this tower would be the tallest tower in the world. But after the incident on September 11<sup>th</sup> the planes changed. Now it is the eighteenth skyscraper tallest in the world, and the second tallest in Chicago. Located by the river it is one of the newest towers in the city, and the beautiful glass structure can reflect the sky. It has contemporary rooms, 339 room Trump, 486 luxury condominiums, spa, rooms for different events, and people can enjoy of the sixteen restaurant with terrace where it can be appreciate the Chicago's skyline. (Choose Chicago, 2017)

**5.2.2. John Hancock Center:** Finished in 1969, it has an enormous size and a black exterior. It is one of the most recognize and beloved skyscrapers and the forty-sixth tallest in the world. The Building turn on a row of lights around the top, the light's color can be seen depending on the season celebration. It is use for retail, office, restaurants and the upper levels are used for living, 700 luxury units. Also this building include two attractions where the visitors can have a beautiful view from this building. The first one is The Signature Room at The 95<sup>th</sup> a restaurant, where the visitors enjoy of the views while they eat. The other one is the 360 Chicago (Formerly John Hancock Observatory), four states can be seen from the observatory. It is one of the 5 best places for to admire Chicago's

skyline. In the ground it can be seen the museum about Chicago's history and also about the views from others buildings. The visitors can enjoy of one of the fastest elevators in the world, and in the 94<sup>th</sup> floor there is the observatory which is member of the World Federation of Great Towers. This observatory has won various awards for its style.

Actually into the 360° observatory the most recent attraction is the TILT which is the first of its kind in the world, it can extends out and over where the visitors can look the views of Chicago. The observatory is the direct competition of Willis Towers who has a floor where the people can enjoy of the views.

**5.2.3. Willis Tower:** The fourteenth tallest skyscraper in the world, and the second in USA.

Originally the Sears Towers. It is innovate glass and the steel design by Fazlur Khan. It has 110 stories. This building was made for Sears Company, with a strategic location by the expressways to benefit Sears's employees. After all the benefit it was not just for the Sears's employees, the city had an advantage too, the building generated new energy in a formerly stagnant West Loop neighborhood, and with the time it became in the most iconic building of Chicago with the most visit sky deck. Due to the Willis Tower is the most iconic tower and attracts millions of visits for its architecture and famous sky deck.

### **5.3. Willis Tower**

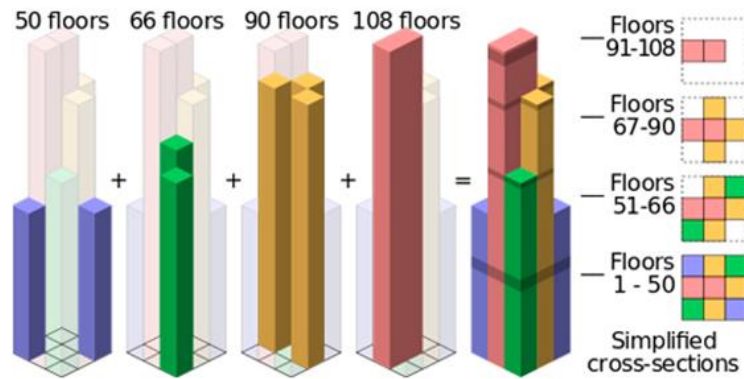
Well known as the Sears Tower, this tower was made of need of the Sears Company to consolidate its offices. In 1969, Sears Roebuck and Company was the largest retailer in the

world, with about 350,000 employees. For build the tower the company hired to architects Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM) which is an architecture firm founded in 1936, this Firm was responsible of the innovate skyscrapers around the world, as the One World Trade Center in New York, Burj Khalifa in Dubai, Trump Tower in Chicago, John Hancock Center in Chicago and certainly The Willis Tower (architecture.org, 2017). Bruce Graham served as architect and Fazlur Khan as structural engineer. The first designs were for a small structure just for Sears, but the architects and real estate proposed to concentrate the Sears's employees in the first levels and make an upper levels that would be for tenants. Sears Company accept and the architects began to design what would be one of the tallest and most important towers of that time, and according to them they were going to build "as tall as the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) will let us go.". The construction for the tower started in July 1970 and it took almost 3 years to finish it. The last beam was commemorated by 12.000 construction workers, Sears's employees, and Chicagoans. The growth projections of Sears were large and this is why they decided to expand the tower, but the Sears tower wasn't what they expected, half of the tower was half-vacant for a decade and the competition with their rivals like Montgomery Ward increase, so this caused that Sears sold the tower in 1988 and moved out totally to Hoffman Estates in 1995. Since then, the tower has had several owners, but always keeping the name Sears Tower until March 2009 that London-based insurance broker Willis Group Holdings agreed to lease a portion of the building, and obtained the building's naming rights. On July, 2009 this building was renamed Willis Tower.

This skyscraper has been an iconic fragment of Chicago, not just for its history but also for its design, and the time that took complete this project. First at all this project was composed of a team of six to eight people with a leader as Hal Lyengar, working overtime the team took just three months making the structural drawings, once the final design was completed the construction for the tower began. (Princeton University, 2011). Secondly, according to CAF (Chicago Architecture Foundation) “The innovative vertical-tube design was inspired by the uneven arrangement cigarettes make when they are pushed out of a pack” the idea was suggested for Fazlur Khan as structural engineer who also support the design of John Hancock Center, the design of taller towers in Chicago as Willis towers or Hancock Center have to offset the force of the wind due to the average wind speed is 16 miles per hour in Chicago, so the force of the wind can push horizontally the skyscrapers and this can collapse. Consequently Willis Tower is “comprised of a cluster of nine tubes connected together to act as a single unit. The tubes support one another, strengthening the structure as a whole. Meanwhile, the variations in tube height disrupt the force of the wind”. (CAF, Chicago Architecture Foundation).



*Figure 2: Willis Tower Structure*



Wkiarquitectura. (2017). Structure [Diagram]. Referenced from:  
<https://en.wikiarquitectura.com/building/sears-tower-willis-tower/>

Actually the Willis Tower is the highest point in Chicago, it has a 110 stories, 1450 feet, excluding broadcast antennas and their supports. Although now is the fourteenth tallest skyscraper in the world, and the second in USA it kept the record of being the tallest skyscraper in the world for 25 years, until 1998 when it was surpassed by the Petronas Twin Towers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Also it is one of the greatest first constructions in the world. “Willis Tower is currently a multi-tenant office building with more than 100 companies doing business

on the premises, including major law firms, insurance companies, and financial services firms”(Willistower.com,2017). The tower is at the same time is one of the most recognized and visited Chicago’s tourist attractions due to Sky deck and the architecture of the building.

### 5.3.1. Sky deck In Willis Tower

*Picture 27: Chicago Skyline, with Willis Tower*



*[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Lake Michigan, 2017). Chicago Skyline, Illinois 1*

Recently architecture and glass platforms have become in a popular touristic attraction, and Chicago is one of the cities that offer beauty in its architecture as well as beauty in the skyline that can be seen from The Sky deck a glass platforms that is in Willis Tower. According to Choosechicago.com this Sky deck “attract more than 1.7 million visitors every year”. The Sky deck opened on June 22, 1974, and on January, 2009 the tower’s owners decided to renovate the Sky deck adding The Ledge which are four boxes that have a thin film over the top layer of glass that assures a clear view.

***Picture 28: Chicago View From Skydeck, Night***



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Skydeck, Willis Tower, 2016), Chicago Illinois

This boxes are designed for extend 4.3 feet from the building and retract into the building which allow an easier cleaning and maintenance, and was built to withstand four tons of pressure and can hold 10,000 lb. (skydeck.com). The Sky deck is located on the 103rd floor of the tower is 1,353 feet above ground, and it has another in the 99<sup>th</sup> floor that is used when the other one is closed. It has a competition with the John Hancock Center's observation which is 323 feet lower, and the observatory is different because of the moving platform which is 314 meters above the ground. (newworldencyclopedia.org, 2016). Due to the excellent location by the heart of Chicago that the tower own, from the Sky deck it is possible to see four states with clear weather, Illinois Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin.

This offers delightful overlooks that attract thousands of tourists which makes big lines for access to the Sky deck, and although get into the Sky deck and the Ledge takes approximately two hours, on the way to visit this attractions the tourist can learn about the Chicago its history and cultural, and the iconic tower through a museum, videos screen and a theater. (theskydeck.com).

*Picture 29: Chicago View from Sky deck, Afternoon*



[Picture of Ludy Silva]. (Sky deck, Willis Tower, 2016), Chicago Illinois

#### **5.4. Conclusion**

What tourists really want from the place where they visit is have a good memories, good experiences that they can tell to others, recently what characterizes the tourism is the desire of experience or “experience hunger” and now this is the major driver of tourism (Hall,

2004). These experiences are possible to get to unique tourist destinations, and lately architecture offers this to the cities. As Ye, Helen Yi and Tussyadiah said “The architectural environment of a city tells its distinctive characteristics. Tourists’ interactions and experience with the physical features of destinations provide the opportunity to construct their own narratives about themselves”. Accordingly to this now the architecture is a way to attract more tourists and what they want to see authentic experiences from unique or exotic place that usually are describe as “Escapist” and “Spectacular”. (Ockman and Frausto, 2005).

Chicago has been one of the cities that has recently increased its visits due to the beauty of its architecture and skylines. The city took advantage through this. As it was described above after the big fire this city started to rebuild again, but showing the world the beauty in the architecture. This city helped as inspiration for the architects who came to develop their ideas which with time became great tourist attractions that in the last years have increased tourism. According to the travel site TripAdvisor the city is tops a list as the most popular tour to see the city's architecture and first famous skyscrapers through a boat cruise. Last year the city set a new tourism record with more than 54 million visitors. Some of the most famous and visited attractions is the Willis Tower that was the tallest tower in the world for 25 years. Although actually the tower is not the tallest, it is an iconic attraction due to history and its construction. Into this tower is The Sky deck which attracts 1.7 million visitors that are looking for new experiences, these kind of attractions are designed to challenge the fear of the heights, and see a new perspective of beauty from there; this is a multisensory activity that makes the new experiences which is what the tourists want.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Nowadays, professionals look for the best ways to acquire competitive skills in order to have most and better opportunities, so most of them are attract to live abroad through cultural exchanges programs. This programs offer multiple benefits that allow to the professionals to develop many skills that are very useful in the future of a Tourist and Hotel professional. First, live for a long period of time in a foreigner country allow to the participants to took part of many celebrations, festivities, and activities with natives; which provide them of a cultural enrichment and a knowledge about the culture; and at the same time, the participant become in an open mind and more sociable person.

Secondly, learn and improve a language from the knowledge of the culture, as it was mention to really speak a language it is important understand what really people want to mean through of their idioms, expressions and words that it just can be understand when the participants live in the host country and begins to be part of the culture too. But also the academic classes that help to improve the other English skills like grammar, writing, reading and vocabulary. Be bilingual is a big advantage for people who works in Tourism and Hotels industry, because are people that always needs to communicate to offer a service, so for them it is indispensable spoke a second language.

Also professional and personal growth, the person who participate in this programs are more competitive than before to get a job, because in the time abroad develop skills which are very useful for the new labor environment such as communicate in a second language, independence, creativity, responsible, among other skills that not only help with the labor

environment but also with the personal development which will make possible to get better jobs with better salaries.

Finally, participate in a Cultural Exchanges programs definitely leaves great memories made in the host country and people who becomes in close friends that sometime feels like a family.



## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Being a part of a Cultural Exchange seems challenging initially but with the time it is a very satisfactory experience. During one's time there, the most important virtue is to be patient. There will be times when you question everything, times when it gets tough but always remind yourself why you decided to do it and be focus on your goals and follow them passionately. To start with, it is very important to be always honest with the host family. This will avoid any problems, misunderstandings and hence you will have a good experience. First few months can be complicated as it is not easy be in a new country, live in a home that is not yours, and share home with people with different customs and language. Make sure to do a thorough research of the place you plan to go. This will help you in your initial time there. Good handy information will help you in day to day aspects there. Besides at first English language can seem impossible to learn. But during these first few months I will recommend you to be surrounded by native people and use the different tools like listen to their music, watch English shows, attend class and be close to your host kids who are always very helpful.

During this experience there are moments that although everything is all right we get nostalgic and just want to come back. We forget at times how much we have achieved in another country, how much we have grown and have improved various skills. United States is a country that offers multiple benefits like study free in the libraries, meet people from other country and learn from them, or just enjoy places that sadly, Colombia does not have. So take full advantage of these and try to learn every small possible thing in your every free time.

Keep an open mind and try to explore as much as you can. Do not wait for a company, if you don't have one you will make new friends there if you go out. Also importantly never feel shy or embarrassed because of your weak English. People are very friendly there and are supportive. If in need ask for help without any hesitation and someone will assist you with what you need.

Travel as much as it is possible. This it is one of the best parts and not everyone has the opportunity or the time to do it. Visit beautiful places and always go to different places. Try not to repeat. Also travelling is a great way to improve your English because you are in a country where a majority speaks English. So every place you go and every moment you will interact listen and speak English.

Definitely, I will strongly recommend this. It has multiple benefits and is advantages in the long run. Not only your hold over English language will improve but also you will grow both professionally and personally. You will get a new sense of confidence and independence which will help to apply for future jobs.

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## 10. ATTACHMENTS

### *Attached 1: Abstract Pre-Project*

#### **Abstract**

The tourism and hotel sector has been growth in the last years and recently is one of the sectors with more future, as a result the labor demand increase and the theoretical knowledge it is not enough, now it is require people with more competitive skills. One of the competitive skills that a Tourism and Hotel professional needs is be able to communicate, people who works in this sector are constantly dealing with foreigners with a different culture and language, due to professionals have to speak other language particularly English, since this is the business language.

However Colombia is a country where most of the professionals don't speak a second language, which it is a big problem when they have to face the labor environment since be a bilingual is a basic tool for open doors to national companies and around the world. Must take into account that it is not only speak a second language but also understand what it really means, because it is difficult that a person who don't know about a culture can speak the language; therefore the person who wants to learn a second language has to immerse in the culture otherwise it won't be able to keep a fluid conversation. This for the Tourist and Hotel professional is indispensable because no matter the area of the

sector, the professional always are in constant communication with costumers and for an excellent service it needs excellent communication.

As a result the universities of the most developed countries in Tourism and Hotel Management like Spain have chosen to develop cultural exchanges programs where the next professionals can learn a second language and at the same time have a cultural enrichment from the countries that they will visit. That's why the student who carried out this project, decided to learn English as a second language with the final purpose to increase the communication skills. For this the student had to make a cultural immersion with an American Host Family, participated in the cultural and social events, travel, have an academic education, and make a research about the tourist attractions of the city of Chicago. Which were basic aims to learn English.



*Attached 2 Go Au Pair Certificate*



T 888.287.2471  
 F 888.287.2470  
[www.goaupair.com](http://www.goaupair.com)  
 151 East 6100 South, Ste. 200  
 Murray, UT 84107

September 12, 2015

To Whom it May Concern:

Go Au Pair is one of a handful of sponsors designated by the United States Department of State to bring young adult foreign nationals to the U.S. for a period of one year for the purpose of residing with an American Host Family to provide limited childcare and attend an accredited post-secondary institution for no less than 6 semester credit hours. Au Pairs provide childcare up to 45 hours per week for the 12 month period covered on their DS-2019 form. Host Families are required to pay the Au Pair for such employment.

This letter certifies that Ludy Edikc Silva Leon is a participant with the Go Au Pair program. Ms. Ludy Edikc Silva Leon arrived in the United States on 9/17/2015 with a valid J-1 visa, DS-2019 form and I-94. Ms. Ludy Edikc Silva Leon is authorized to work as an Au Pair for the Francois Nel & Elizabeth Harris family, who resides at 209 Hillcrest Ave, Bellevue, NE 68005.

Please accept this letter as confirmation that the Au Pair has authorization to perform childcare duties as a participant in our program. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 801-255-7722.

Sincerely,

Crystal Hardman  
 Placement Coordinator  
 Go Au Pair

Attached 3 Ds-2019 2015-2017

U.S. Department of State		OMB APPROVAL NO 1405-0119 09/30/2017 ESTIMATED BURDEN TIME: 45 min *See Page 2	
<b>CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY FOR EXCHANGE VISITOR STATUS (J-NONIMMIGRANT)</b>			
1. Surname/Primary Name: <b>Silva Leon</b>		Given Name: <b>Ludy Ediko</b>	
Date of Birth (mm-dd-yyyy): <b>07-28-1990</b>	City of Birth: <b>Duitama</b>	Country of Birth: <b>COLOMBIA</b>	Citizenship Country Code: <b>CO</b>
Legal Permanent Residence Country Code: <b>CO</b>		Legal Permanent Residence Country: <b>COLOMBIA</b>	Citizenship Country: <b>COLOMBIA</b>
Primary Site of Activity: <b>Nel, Francois and Harris, Elizabeth 1125 LANCASTER CT HOFFMAN ESTATES, IL 60169-6916</b>		Position Code: <b>210</b>	Position: <b>UNIVERSITY LEVEL GROUP</b>
2. Program Sponsor: <b>American Cultural Exchange, LLC, dba goAuPair</b>		Program Number: <b>P-4-10100</b>	
Participating Program Official Description: <b>AU PAIR</b>			
Purpose of this form: <b>Replace a DS-2019 form (Lost)</b>			
3. Form Covers Period: From (mm-dd-yyyy): <b>09-17-2015</b> To (mm-dd-yyyy): <b>09-16-2017</b>		4. Exchange Visitor Category: <b>AU PAIR</b> Subject/Field Code: <b>19.0709</b> Subject/Field Code Remarks: <b>Participant in a program that prepares individuals to be primary providers of residential</b>	
5. During the period covered by this form, the total estimated financial support (in U.S. \$) is to be provided to the exchange visitor by: Current Program Sponsor funds: \$2,500.00 Nel, Francois and Harris, Elizabeth: \$10,179.00 Total: \$12,679.00			
6. U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE / DHS USE OR CERTIFICATION BY RESPONSIBLE OFFICER OR ALTERNATE RESPONSIBLE OFFICER THAT A NOTIFICATION COPY OF THIS FORM HAS BEEN PROVIDED TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE (INCLUDE DATE).		7. <b>Meghan Ramirez</b> Name of Official Preparing Form <b>151 East 6100 South Suite 200 Murray, AR 72662</b> Signature of Responsible Officer or Alternate Responsible Officer <i>[Signature]</i>	
		Alternate Responsible Officer Title <b>801-255-7722</b> Telephone Number <b>02-03-2017</b> Date (mm-dd-yyyy)	
8. Statement of Responsible Officer for Releasing Sponsor (FOR TRANSFER OF PROGRAM) Effective date (mm-dd-yyyy): _____ Transfer of this exchange visitor from program number _____ sponsored by _____ to the program specified in item 2 is necessary or highly desirable and is in conformity with the objectives of the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended.			
Signature of Responsible Officer or Alternate Responsible Officer		Date (mm-dd-yyyy) of Signature	
PRELIMINARY ENDORSEMENT OF CONSULAR OR IMMIGRATION OFFICER REGARDING SECTION 212(e) OF THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT AND PL 94-484, AS AMENDED (see item 1(a) of page 2). The Exchange Visitor in the above program: 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Not subject to the two-year residence requirement. 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Subject to two-year residence requirement based on: A. <input type="checkbox"/> Government financing and/or B. <input type="checkbox"/> The Exchange Visitor Skills List and/or C. <input type="checkbox"/> PL 94-484 as amended  Name _____ Title _____ Signature of Consular or Immigration Officer _____ Date (mm-dd-yyyy) _____ <b>THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE FINAL DETERMINATION REGARDING 212 (e).</b>		TRAVEL VALIDATION BY RESPONSIBLE OFFICER (Maximum validation period is 1 year*) *EXCEPT: Maximum validation period is up to 6 months for Short-term Scholars and 4 months for Camp Counselors and Summer Work/Travel. (1) Exchange Visitor is in good standing at the present time  Date (mm-dd-yyyy) _____ Signature of Responsible Officer or Alternate Responsible Officer (2) Exchange Visitor is in good standing at the present time  Date (mm-dd-yyyy) _____ Signature of Responsible Officer or Alternate Responsible Officer	
EXCHANGE VISITOR CERTIFICATION: I have read and agree with the statement in item 2 on page 2 of this document.			
Signature of Applicant		Place _____ Date (mm-dd-yyyy)	

***Attached 4: Child Care Training Certificate***



*Attached 5: Harper College Certificate*

 Harper College

## DEGREE/CERTIFICATE EVALUATION

The Degree Works evaluation below is processed based on requirements for the program of study and catalog term on your official record (see below).

Student View A000FIAe as of 04/07/2018 at 17:12					
Student	Silva, Ludy	Program of Study	ESL	Cumulative GPA	0.00
ID	H00758494	Catalog Term	Spring 2016	Academic Standing	Good Standing
		Advisor/Counselor		Holds	

### Degree/Certificate Progress



Requirements


0%

The Degree/Certificate Progress Bar, above, is an **estimation** of your progress toward completion of your degree or certificate. Please review your entire evaluation for incomplete requirements.

**Credits Required:**                      **Credits Completed:** 0

#### Legend

	Complete		Complete except for classes in-progress	(T)	Transfer Class
	Not Complete	PLAN	Planned classes	IP	In Progress

 Degree Not Yet Declared

Catalog Year: Spring 2016

 Degree Not Yet Declared

**Still Needed:** Our records indicate that you need to update your Program of Study, which is why no requirements are being displayed. Please update your Program of Study using the link at the top of this page. Until then, using the What-If evaluation function will return a more complete evaluation.

NOT NEEDED - extra courses			Credit Hours : 9	Courses: 3
ESL 050	ESL: CORE LANGUAGES SKILLS V	BR	3	Fail 2016
ESL 063	ESL: WRITING III	CR	4	Spring 2016
ESL 075	ESL: CONVERSATION VI	AR	2	Summer 2016

#### Disclaimer

You are encouraged to use this degree/certificate evaluation as a guide when reviewing your progress toward completion of the above requirements. Contact an advisor/counselor or the Registrar's Office for assistance in interpreting the evaluation. This evaluation is not your academic transcript and it is not official notification of completion of degree or certificate requirements. Please contact the Registrar's Office regarding your official degree/certificate completion status or to obtain a copy of your official academic transcript.



**Attached 6: Meeting New People**



**Native Friend Jenny**



**Natives Friends**



**Meetings Au Pair**



**Hrantinsky Family**



**Dinner with Host Family**



**Running Competition with Host Family**

*1 Pictures of Ludy Silva (2015-2016) Meeting new people*

*Attached 7: Activities to Learn English*



**Painting Activity**



**Visiting museums**



**Making Christmas Decoration**



**Walking out with Jenn**



**Participating in Family Games**



**Play Dates with Host Kids**

*2 Pictures of Ludy Silva (2015-2017) Activities to learn English*





**Festival with Host Kids**



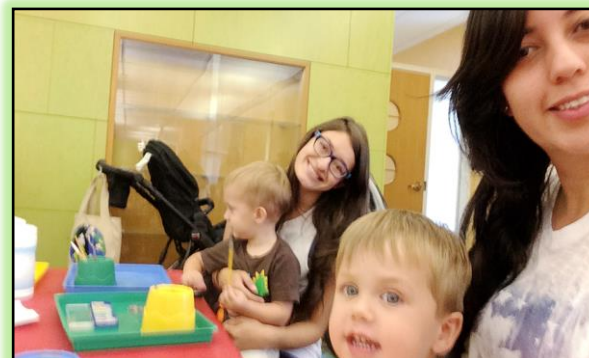
**Watching movies with Host Kids**



**At the Zoo with Host Kids**



**Six Flags with Friends**



**Histoty Time At the Library**



**Summer in Wisconsin**

*3Pictures of Ludy Silva (2015-2017) Activities to Learn English*

*Attached 8: Traveling into USA*



**Farm, Nebraska**



**Vegas**



**Golden Gate, San Francisco**



**Castillo de San Felipe, Puerto Rico**



**Cleveland**



**White House, Washington**

*4 Pictures of Ludy Silva (2015-2017) Traveling into United States*





**Boston**



**Vegas**



**Azkaban, San Francisco**



**Philadelphia**

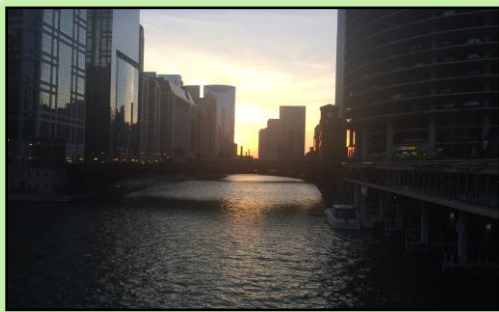


**Boston**

*Attached 9: Chicago*



**Lake Michigan**



**Sun Set Chicago River**



**Chicago Theater**



**Chicago River**



**Skyline Chicago**

*6Pictures of Ludy Silva (2016-2017) Downtown Chicago*

*Attached 10: Willis Tower*



**Museum Willis Tower**



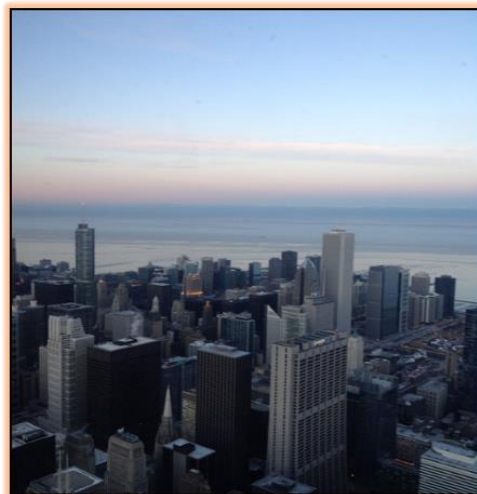
**Skyline With Willis Tower**



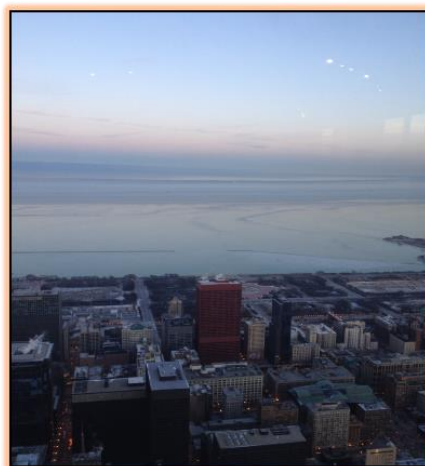
**Glass platforms views**



**Glass platforms views**



**Glass platforms views**



**Glass platforms views**

*7 Pictures of Ludy Silva (2016-2017) Willis Tower*



