



## Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

**Report Title:** Renaissance Women      **Name:** Lisa Anders  
**Other Team Members:** Amy Dugat  
**Program:** Greater Houston Area Program  
**Trip Dates:** 07/27/2011 - 08/10/2011      **Location Visited:** Rome, Italy  
**Post Fellowship Reporting Template:** PFR Template 02

**Project Summary:** "If you can dream it, you can do it." This quote from Walt Disney could have easily come from Leonardo da Vinci or Gian Lorenzo Bernini, men who never allowed convention stand in the way of an idea. Our inspiration was the student in the back of the classroom who thinks that art is uninteresting, unimportant and irrelevant. Our goal was to transform ourselves for that student from "art teachers" to "art explorers" and bring the Renaissance back to our classrooms. Through our experiences that child too can be inspired by the same driving force that made Michelangelo pick up his chisel and carve into the flawed block of marble that was David. Our travels took us deep into the heart of the Renaissance, from Rome and Vatican City to Florence, Pisa, Milan and Venice. Each destination provided a wealth of historical and cultural knowledge, stories and secrets to be shared. We learned about engineering triumphs at the Duomo in Florence and engineering tragedies at the Leaning Tower of Pisa. We stood in awe of fresco perfection at the Sistine Chapel and fresco imperfection at The Last Supper. We learned how the city of Venice embraced its neighbors of various religious and ethnic backgrounds and created an empire of diversity and beauty like none other. Each destination held its own treasure trove of artistic masterpieces, but the unifying thread was the indomitable spirit of man, unfettered by limitations, aware only of the pure potential of possibility.

**Career Impact:** My colleague and I gained valuable experience as a team to accomplish our goal of exploring as much of the Italian Renaissance as possible. In our two-week trip we worked through such challenges as communicating across cultural and linguistic divides, navigating our way across country, overcoming unexpected obstacles as well as budgeting our time and finances. Our extensive travels and shared adventures have brought us closer together as a work family. We both brought a unique personal and academic perspective to each situation and learned how to trust each other in new and testing situations. We were inspired each day by what we saw with new ideas for the classroom to connect the Old World experiences to our Internet-age students. This experience has given us amazing insights and first-hand encounters with ancient cultures and world treasures that we have been able to share with students, colleagues and companions through social media, school websites, postcards and discussions.

**Classroom/Community Impact:** This experience has translated into more patience, adaptability and flexibility in the classroom, which mirrors our travels in its twists and turns into the unexpected and the incredible. Skills used to navigate the labyrinth of Venetian alleyways are surprisingly similar to those needed to work with the myriad of new faces and personalities we are greeted with at the beginning of each school year. My colleague and I have discovered how much our journey abroad has prepared us for our work year at home. Our story becomes their story as students gain confidence through our enthusiasm. Interest in travel and history is sparked with each experience we share; a translated experience of how the desire to do can empower each student to create, either through entering a contest, embarking on a project in a new medium, or simply daring to dream that more is possible.

**Open Response:** Our travels have encouraged us to expand our canvas outside the classroom. My colleague and I will be presenting at the state level conference for art educators on our experiences with Fund for Teachers with the objective of inspiring others. We have addressed our colleagues on the district level and shared our story. We have become ambassadors on our campus for those interested in the program. Potential projects for our school year include student research on traveling abroad to study art as well as excursions to local art museums. We plan to create a collaborative art event based on Renaissance-themed ideas that will cross curricular boundaries.

**Quote:** "No text can do justice to the triumph of the Renaissance. When you gaze up at the Sistine Chapel, you just know."

Photos:



It was easy to understand why the city of Venice inspired so many artists.



Amy photographs the majestic interior of St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome.



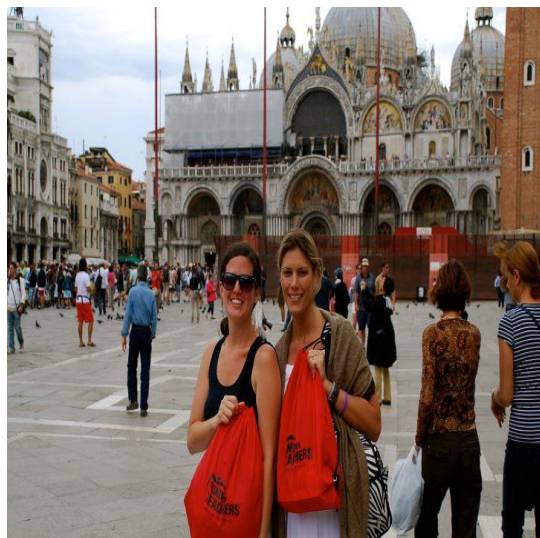
Lisa and Amy at the Colosseum in Rome.



Michelangelo's dome of St. Peter's was a landmark from anywhere in the city.



A picturesque view of the city of Florence.



St. Mark's Basilica was an eclectic blend of art styles.



The Laocoön Group provided inspiration for Renaissance artists.



Amy and Lisa throw three coins into the Trevi Fountain in Rome.