As a first time volunteer with Amazon Promise, I really didn't know what to expect from my trip. Destiny seemed to be against me when a hurricane hit Texas nearly led to my flight to Lima being cancelled. Then a delay in Miami made me miss my connection in Lima. Then an earthquake occurred while I was in my hotel room in Lima. And then I nearly missed hooking up with the group in Iquitos, as they were getting ready to board the oil company plane for the jungle just as I finally arrived from Lima! But everything worked out and we took off for the jungle town of Trompeteros.

The rest of the trip was amazing. Arriving in the boats each day to a different jungle village and not knowing what to expect was very exciting. Would this village have electricity? Would this village have running water? Would this village help us with our medical supplies? So, each day was different and exciting.

Some of the people were more primitive than others, but they each had so many things in common. They all lived along a river, hunted for their meat, farmed for their vegetables, and traded for the things they needed, such as clothes and other necessities. The things we take for granted, they probably have never even thought about. We worry incessantly about paying our mortgage, stopping at the grocery store, being late for work, and where we are going to go out on a Friday night. To these people, I wonder how many have even seen a car, a white person, or ever worried about being late for work.

Things are very different in the jungle and it was an experience just to be there and see the things we take for granted that they work so very hard for on a daily basis. It definitely gives you a much greater appreciation for the little things in life!

Bonnie was on the October 2005 Promise Expedition to the Pastaza region. She is a physician assistant student at the University of Texas and a soldier in the Army Reserve and National Guard.