

with you my wonderful experience at this ancient Incan wonderland. Upon arrival in the city of Machu Picchu, on a beautiful sunny Friday, I was bringing up the rear and following the other students to check in to our hotel. I had my cane with me and walked a rutted sidewalk in awe of the native children playing on the tracks that run down the middle of the shopping and restaurant district. The city, Machu Picchu and the tourist area, is not accommodating to people with even slight disabilities. The conveniences that we take for granted here, are non-existent in Cusco. I never fully appreciated hand rails on stairs, sidewalks that fade to street level, raised toilets and other blessings that assist us here in the United States. My walk to the hotel was interrupted when I fell flat on my face. Six local men came to my assistance and had me in a wheelchair and seeing a nurse in a matter of minutes. Apparently I fell right in front of the local infirmary, blood everywhere. After being told to take it easy for the rest of the day, my friends returned from their day trip to the ruins of Machu Picchu to inform me that I was not going to be able to handle the climb to the top of the ruins that I had been looking forward to so much. Their plan however, was to get me there come hell or high water and that is exactly what they did. With my cane in my left hand, Debby Cook from Yulee holding my right arm and Tancy Campbell from Jacksonville behind me, the three of us walked the hundreds of steps, one by one, over a period of several hours to the top of Machu Picchu. I was able to look down on the Plaza where a female llama and her new baby were getting to know each other. My birds eye view of this wondrous place and the unsolicited gift of assistance from two women I had known for less than a week is something I will never forget and be eternally grateful for LIFE IS WONDERFUL!

Claire King