When I was young, I learned to crave experiencing the unknown by sitting in front of the television on a red shag carpet on Saturday mornings and watching National Geographic specials. These shows opened up whole new worlds to me, revealing how ordinary and extraordinary people led lives so different from my own. They sparked in me an interest that was fed and encouraged by reading books after books, by hearing the tales of the international travelers who visited my childhood home, and by the teachers and professors who influenced my life.

As the Director of the Center for Global Citizenship at Hathaway Brown, I help students realize the joy in discovering the diverse, interesting, and amazing people and places that make up our world. In many ways, my whole life has led me to this position.

I’ve spent years traveling the globe and studying international relations and politics. Together, the more than 50 countries I’ve visited tell a story. Some chapters are exciting (Thailand), some comforting (Switzerland), some will remain stamped in my memory forever (Yemen, East Timor, Laos), and other remind me of how little I know about how short life really is (Uzbekistan). There are places, such as Indonesia and Italy, that have called me back time and time again because of the wonderful experiences I’ve had there. And there are others, such as Russia, that have continually beckoned for me just to try to figure them out.

In my travels, I’ve learned that there are places that look best during certain months or seasons (you really should see Germany in springtime), and that good friends — like the ones I have in Vietnam and Haiti — often can be found across distant borders. I’ve just returned from an exciting trip with HB students to India, where we spent time learning about the women there and we even got to catch a glimpse of the Dalai Lama. And the girls and I are very much looking forward to the voyage we’ll make to China in 2013.

Over the years, I’ve learned that I feel most alive when I’m the accepted guest in a place where little can be called familiar, and when I’m in the classroom teaching what I love. Too often, we know too little about the diversity of the world, the roots of conflict, the importance of alliances, and the work of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. I want to help girls learn and experience enough to be the committed, passionate and informed citizens our world so desperately needs.

HB students will graduate in an era of globalization, and it is my goal that the Center for Global Citizenship prepares them for the immense challenges and rewarding opportunities that lie ahead. I’m thrilled to be their tour guide for the first part of what promises to be an incredible journey.