What is your name? Where are you from?

My name is Cristina Varisco and I am from Italy.

When were you at Stanford? For how long?

I was at Stanford from September 2010 till September 2012.

Were you a student or a spouse at Stanford? What were you/your spouse studying?

I was a graduate student at Stanford and I graduated with a Master's degree in the Humanities.

Where do you live now and what are you doing?

I live in Milan, Italy and work at Politecnico University at a research center for innovation and technologies in academia and international companies.

When you were at Stanford, how did you hear about the CCIS?

By searching the Bechtel International Center website.

Which CCIS programs did you participate in and in what capacity?

I participated in the Homestay program from the very beginning to the very end. I also gave a very short introduction and testimony of my Homestay experience at two different CCIS events, one at a golf course and one at the Bechtel International Center.

When and how did you decide to participate in these CCIS programs?

I was struck by the SMILE of the CCIS volunteers and I just felt that from the very first meeting I could not stay at Stanford without being in touch with my host family on a daily basis. They became very important to me. Actually, I was more in touch with them than with my real family overseas!

How was your experience taking part in CCIS programs?

It was one of the best experiences I had at Stanford and one that I will always carry in my heart. I made lifetime friendships and I felt at home all the time. I was amazed by how much a "host family" could open up to a complete stranger from a different culture and with different habits, and how much time and sincere interest volunteers put into the program.

What message would you like to give to the CCIS?

Dear CCIS,

You made my Stanford experience one of the most precious experiences of my life. I will forever keep you in my heart and I will never be able to thank you enough!

Cristina