**Student Spotlight: Kristen Cowan**

**Who She Is:**
Kristen Cowan is a second-year from Aurora, Ohio (a Cleveland suburb) majoring in Neuroscience with a minor in Spanish. She hopes to study Physical Therapy in grad school. Her hobbies include hanging out with friends, listening to music, working out, and watching sports. When she gets the chance to watch television, she enjoys Grey's Anatomy and Parks and Rec. She is passionate about service- both abroad and in the Columbus area- and loves both OSU football and the people she has met here. Though she is a vegetarian, Cowan is a pizza fanatic, known among friends for having tried almost all of the pizza places around campus.

**What She Does:**
Cowan is involved with Pay It Forward, a student cohort that provides students on campus with service opportunities; she serves as the CAUSE coordinator. Additionally, she is the Co-President of Project Nicaragua, which seeks to improve the lives of families and children in Rancho Grande, Nicaragua. This is a national organization, and she is involved with Ohio State’s chapter.

**How She Got Involved with Clinton Global Initiative University:**
Cowan applied along with two graduating senior members of Project Nicaragua, Rachel Welch and Alisha Kamboj. (Welsh is the Co-President.) Fundraising for the people of Rancho Grande is no small task, and the three of them hoped that being part of this program could raise awareness of what they are doing and perhaps create more funding.

**Her Commitment to Action:**
Along with Welsh and Kamboj, Cowan’s Commitment to Action is to teach self-defense through a dance and cultural session to women in Nicaragua and other central/south American countries, where domestic abuse and rape are prevalent due to the “machismo” culture. Unfortunately, in these countries, it is socially unacceptable to talk about these issues in front of men, but a dance is a culturally-appropriate, subtle way to teach these women how to defend themselves. Cowan believes that this project will make a large impact because it is self-sustaining; the self-defense moves that the women will learn are not expendable resources that will eventually be used up; they are resources that can be passed on through generations of women, hopefully reducing the occurrences of abuse over time.