

## A Education Prevails

AS I WALKED through the cobblestone streets of San Jose, Costa Rica, I came across a large yellow building, the Bellavista Fortress. Originally it was used as a military barrack, and at first glance the building was a nondescript “old building” with crenulations along the top. As I turned the corner, the building transformed from being nondescript, into a being a powerful reminder of Costa Rica’s turbulent past.

The front of the building has been refurbished, but at the back corner of the building you can still see bullet holes from the Costa Rican Civil War. After the National Liberation Army won the civil war, it abolished the military, and to this day, Costa Rica still does not have a military.

As a visitor to this Central American nation, one cannot pass by this bullet filled turret on the corner

without thinking of how a building which was used for war is now used for education. The corner turret on the Bellavista Fortress serves as a reminder to all who will listen, of what can happen when forces of oppression try to overpower forces of education.

### SPENCER LIGHTSY

Director of International Programs  
University of Houston-Downtown

