



### **Can you tell us a little about yourself?**

*My name is Megan Irby and I'm from Glendale, Arizona. I came to the University of Arizona because of their premed program and in-state tuition. I'm majoring in mathematics and molecular and cellular biology.*

### **Where will you be serving in the Peace Corps? When will you start? What will you be doing?**

*I will be going to Zambia on August 16, 2020 to be a maternal/child HIV/AIDS educator.*

### **Why did you want to join the Peace Corps? When did you first start thinking about joining?**

*I first started thinking about joining the Peace Corps as a senior in high school, when my friend mentioned passively that she wanted to join. I had heard of the Peace Corps before, but I didn't entirely know what it was. I thought it was a branch of the military! After she finished laughing at my ignorance, she filled me in on what it was and what they do and I was intrigued.*

*I was the president of a community service club at the time — and I loved it — but I didn't like that all of our events were very episodic. I didn't feel like I was making any large-scale, long-term impacts. Thus, I was excited to hear about an opportunity to not only make a larger impact, but also to learn about a new culture and better myself as a person along the way.*

### **What do you consider the main benefits of being part of the Peace Corps Prep Program, and receiving the U. S. Peace Corps Prep Certificate?**

*I found the application process for the Peace Corps to be a stressful one. The acceptance rate is highly selective, and I was very nervous that I would not receive an invitation to serve. The Peace Corps Prep Program helped to alleviate those fears.*

### **What other steps did you take to be a strong applicant for the Peace Corps?**

*I went to ask the Campus Recruiter, Hannah Martin, for help often. I first met her at a Peace Corps application workshop, and she gave me her email. From then on, I contacted her frequently to review my motivational statement and give me practice interviews. She was a tremendous help!*

### **Can you describe your volunteer work and extracurricular activities during your time at UArizona?**

*I am involved in a community service club called "Rotaract," which does local community service events around Tucson. I was the volunteer coordinator for a group on campus called "Camp Kesem," helping to create a camp for children who have been impacted by a parent's cancer. I'm hoping to be a counselor again this year!*

*I'm involved in the math club on campus — "Mathcats," and in a leadership program called "Blue Chip." I am one of the STEMcats volunteers who go to a local library, and make math fun for kids! I'm also involved in the Gutenkunst research lab, and worked as a tutor for a few years!*

### **What are you most looking forward to as a Peace Corps Volunteer?**

*I'm excited to learn more about the culture. I've never been to Zambia, but I hear they have a pretty cool waterfall!*

### **Are you worried about anything?**

*I am terrified of not being able to contact my friends and family readily. I'm going to miss them very much — to the extent that it is a little painful to think about. I expect I will be the only English speaker around, and that sounds slightly uncomfortable. I will not be able to go get whatever food I feel like because my options will be limited. Also, I get cold very easily, and I will not have access to heaters. However, I feel like this is something that I really need to do!*

### **What do you hope to learn from your Peace Corps experience?**

*I hope to learn a lot about culture, music and traditions. I hope to learn more about the issues that others face in a way that I will be able to better empathize with others in the future. I also kind of hope to learn more about who I am. Will I stick it out in the face of adversity in order to help others? Will I be able to roll with the punches? Am I creative enough to make this project a success? I hope the answer to all of these questions is 'yes.'*