

What was your undergraduate alma mater? Program-of-study?

University of Vermont, Major: Anthropology, Minors: Spanish and Global & Regional Studies.

Where did you serve? When?

Patzicia, Chimaltenango, Guatemala, 2014-2016.



What was your primary job? Did you have any secondary projects? How did you go about starting those?

I was a Maternal and Children's Health Volunteer. The primary goal of the project was to collaborate with health clinics, community organizations, and family members to promote healthier lives for mothers and children. I worked with everyone from the Department of Health to the local group of midwives. As a secondary project we painted murals throughout the town. I met students and teachers who were gifted artists so we decided to plan the mural project. I received a small grant from the town and we painted murals until we ran out of paint.

At what point in your life did you start thinking about joining the Peace Corps? What was your motivation to volunteer?

I grew up volunteering with my grandparents in Immokalee, FL. Beginning from a young age they instilled the importance of service and giving back within me. I loved visiting them in Florida because I met people from other countries. As a kid and still today it's fascinating for me to meet people who come from a different place than me. In high school I started thinking about Peace Corps and so after undergrad it was a natural time for me to apply.

What did you do for fun while you were a volunteer? Did you travel while serving? Where?

For fun as a volunteer I went for runs. I participated in a number of local races. It was a great way to connect with community members. I also played on a basketball team. My host brother played on a soccer team so I would attend his games with my host family. My host uncle owned a bakery and had a huge wood oven. My host family and I would bake carrot cake and sometimes pizza on the weekends. As a Peace Corps volunteer I had friends all across Guatemala. It was interesting to visit fellow volunteers in their sites. I traveled across most of Guatemala during my service. This meant climbing volcanoes, visiting beaches, getting lost in cornfields, and sometimes waking up to the sound of howler monkeys. After my service, before returning to the U.S., I traveled through Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and Colombia.

What was the hardest part about being a Volunteer?

The hardest part about being a volunteer were the expectations I had for myself. There were endless factors that influenced my work that were entirely outside of my control. Yet there were days where it felt like it was my fault that my projects weren't coming together. A lesson I learned was to slow down and not take things so seriously. Ironically once I slowed down things would fall into place.

