

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

I graduated from Western Washington University in Bellingham, WA in March 2010. I obtained a dual Bachelor's in Theater Arts and Spanish Language and Literature.



Where did you serve? When?

I was selected to serve in Panama, 2011-2013.

What was your primary job?

I was an Environmental Health Volunteer with my primary focus being in water and sanitation systems. Throughout my two years, I worked to improve access to potable water: in my community that was through repairing a creek fed aqueduct system and surveying it for future growth of the community. I also worked on latrine coverage, continuing a pilot program of composting latrines and educating the community on latrine use. Other Environmental Health projects included educational programs on disease transmission, hand washing, and nutrition.

Did you have any secondary projects? How did you go about starting those?

I had many secondary projects! Most of them came about through my community assessments and from people directly asking me to help out if I could. Some of my secondary projects included:

- I hosted a youth Gender and Development Leadership camp for youth ages 12-18.
- I taught kindergarten English for the full two years, K-6 English for one year, and an adult English class for six months.
- I hosted a weekly "Love of Literature" reading group.
- I created a community beautification initiative that taught children of all ages to collect garbage and transport it to the nearest town where garbage collection happened.
- I helped the community to build a shelter at the boat port to wait for boat transportation.
- I surveyed and submitted a request to the local government to have a sidewalk built from our boat port to our community.
- I participated in all school events, mainly sports competitions and fundraisers.

What was the clothing/fashion like where you served? Did you have to dress a certain way?

I lived with an indigenous tribe called the Ngöbe-Bugle. They are a very modest people who expect the body to be covered neck to knee. The women wore a traditional dress called a Nagua, with brightly colored triangular shapes around the neck, arm cuffs, waist, and across the bottom. The men wore similarly brightly colored button up shirts.

During my service, I wore traditional clothing to community events to show my solidarity with my community. I dressed modestly for the first year, and then started to share some of my "American" culture by wearing some typical American summer clothing (shorts and tank tops). Showing any more skin than that was frowned upon, therefore I never wore a swimsuit in my community and when I went swimming wore knee length shorts and a t-shirt.



If you learned a new language in Peace Corps, what is your favorite line? What does it mean and why was it your favorite?

In addition to speaking Spanish daily, I also learned the local dialect of the indigenous tribe I lived with, Ngöbere. I have many favorite lines! But if I have to pick just one, I would say my favorite is "Ti ta kaibe nuare." Which means, "I am single and happy." Women traditionally marry very young in the Ngobe tribe, and therefore, I was asked almost daily why I did not have a husband. This line became almost a motto- and an added bonus was that it always seemed to make the other women laugh!

Did the Peace Corps "change" you with respect to what type of career you wanted/want?

My Peace Corps service vastly changed the direction of my career goals and choices. After my service, I utilized my Non-Competitive Eligibility to continuing serving for the Federal Government. I am a very passionate public servant and see myself returning to public service after I complete my MBA here at the University of Arizona. Pre-Peace Corps I never saw myself working for the government or being so passionate about service; however, my two years abroad made me a very proud patriot and instilled a desire in me to see others succeed.