

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

Texas A&M University-Commerce. Liberal Studies.

Where did you serve? When?

Albania 2016-2018



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

I was an assistant English instructor. My secondary projects were life skills and art classes. I used a lot of social media and peer pressure to get kids to come.

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

I saw a sign in the window of a Starbucks for a recruiting event. I'd never heard of the Peace Corps prior to that moment. I thought it sounded like a really cool "cult," plus it was pouring down rain, so I went to check it out. It turned out to not be a cult, but still a good program for me. I consider myself a lifelong learner, and I'm really into the human condition and cultural exchange, so I figured such an experience would really pull me out of my comfort zone and show me things I'd probably never get to see any other way.

With so many other volunteering programs, why were you specifically interested in the Peace Corps?

The length of service. Two years is enough time to really get to know the host community, mess up, try again, and repeat. I think other programs that are short term have good intentions, but depending on the project goals, 6 months or so just doesn't cover it.

What was the food like where you served? If you had a dietary restriction, was that difficult? And how did you manage?

It was pretty good. All freshly killed meat, fruits and vegetables fresh from the dirt. I don't have dietary restrictions, but I definitely knew going in that it's very difficult for me to try new food, so I had to mentally prepare to keep an open mind. The first time I got a whole fish on a plate, with the eyes intact, I think I almost fainted. I made it through the meal by covering the head up a little, discreetly. Now, I don't even worry about fillets. I just eat the whole thing. So if you are a person who is a picky eater, or squeamish, or just a little sketchy like I am, you just have to remember that the worst thing that can happen is you have to face an entire glass of water to wash out the taste. Best case, you have a new delicacy.

