

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

I graduated from the University of San Diego with dual bachelor's degrees; one Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, and another Bachelor of the Arts.

## **Where did you serve? When?**

I served in the Comarca Ngäbe-Buglé in western Panama from June 2015 - November 2017.



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

I was a Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) volunteer. As a WASH volunteer my job was to reduce water-borne disease as well as improve sanitation and hygiene habits. As a result, my primary project was the design and construction of a community-wide water distribution system. This project lasted the full duration of my service and ended with a spigot in every house in the community. I also worked with an elected group to create a plan for managing and maintenance of the system.

Additionally, working with neighboring volunteers, I presented health education talks on topics including: sexual health, HIV and AIDS, water borne disease, leadership skills, goal setting, best practices for soil health, coffee harvesting, and numerous other topics (whatever people wanted to learn about)!

Secondary projects focused mainly on working with youth. I helped facilitate youth camps on leadership, frisbee, and acting; and working alongside an amazing young adult in the community, I taught a weekly English class to elementary and middle school students.

### **How did you feel about the two-year commitment required by the Peace Corps?**

The duration of the Peace Corps is what keeps many people from choosing to serve as a volunteer. Two years sounds like a long time, and it is. But, it gives you enough time to become part of a community, to grow to love the people you live with and the language you learn to speak and whatever land you find yourself in. And then, it ends, and it doesn't feel like long enough.



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

I spent two weeks in Colombia! It was near the end of my service, so I was comfortable speaking in Spanish and navigating Latin American cities. I loved the cities in Colombia but was happy to return home to the fields of rice and corn.

When my service ended, I hiked from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean with a group of other Returned Peace Corps Volunteers. We spent 5 days trekking over the mountains, sleeping in towns that could not be reached by car or horse, and sharing food and stories with people we met along the way.

### **Was your program-of-graduate-study choice influenced by your Peace Corps experience? What led you to choose the University of Arizona?**

Panama has a dry season and a wet season. Water is abundant in the wet season, and scarce in the dry season. During the dry season of my second year of service, several springs in the community dried up. These springs are where community members fill up bottles and jugs for drinking water and cooking, and where they do their laundry and bathe. The lack of availability to a local source of water, albeit for a few weeks until the rain returned, made me realize the impact that climate change will have on communities that depend on a local water source, especially as demand grows and availability of supply fluctuates. So here I am, at UArizona, studying Hydrology and Water Resources, working with a community in Southern Arizona as they struggle to understand the reliability of their groundwater resources.