



WorldTeach Dispatch

April, 2002

WorldTeach: 79 JFK Street Cambridge MA 02138 www.worldteach.org 1-800-4-TEACH-0
Volunteers currently in Costa Rica, Namibia, Ecuador, China, Guatemala and Honduras.
Soon to be in the Marshall Islands!

News From The Field



Yantai, China – by Field Director, Aileen Lainez

The ways Chinese people do things are the major shock for the new volunteers who just came in to Yantai a little over a month ago. Christine Villavaso, an art major from New Orleans, Louisiana, have been trying to understand why the school where she is

living at kept on turning off water supply during the weekends, leaving her feeling filthy every Monday morning. The school maintenance people were fixing the pipes last weekend, was the excuse given to her even if she never heard anybody whacking pipes. Frances Hart, a former primary school teacher from Tucson, Arizona, was surprised

to see the washing machine and a nice vanity mirror in her bathroom but without an outlet to plug these electronics in. Jonathan Logan, a former dotcom employee from San Francisco, was amazed when the schools asked the WorldTeach Field Director when their school semester should end.

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Windhoek, Namibia-by Field Director Vince O'Hara

Namibia's Returning
Volunteers: Part I

As the southern summer fades into fall, the first school term comes to an end, and the first-year WorldTeach Namibia volunteers come into stride, our returning volunteers are really making their impacts felt. This year we have four returning volunteers in Namibia: Viktoria Paulick and

Amy Smego at the AfriCat Foundation, Molly Moran at St. Michael's Primary School near Outjo, and Amelia Ryan at Mweshipandeka Secondary School in Ongwediva. A vivid testimony to the rewards of serving in Namibia, Viktoria Paulick is in her fourth year as a WorldTeacher with AfriCat. Viktoria has built from the

ground up an internationally renowned environmental education program that has to date reached over 20,500 Namibian children. In 2000, the South African branch of the World Wildlife Fund recognized Viktoria's efforts by awarding AfriCat its Green Trust Award for innovation in environmental education. [\(cont. pg. 8\)](#)

San Jose, Costa Rica

After almost three months in Costa Rica, the 2002 volunteers have settled into teaching and the slow pace of rural life. The transition from *stranger in a new land* to *town teacher* is always a roller coaster, but so far the volunteers have stayed remarkably upbeat about the ups and downs of cultural adjustment. Some of this year's keys to

surviving the culture curve have been running, meditating, reading Harry Potter, group emailing and most importantly, keeping a sense of humor. I've been impressed with how easily the volunteers laugh at the inevitable idiosyncrasies of life abroad.

Caught up in the daily routine of lesson planning and teaching, the volunteers often

don't realize just how well they're doing. I try to remind them of what they've already accomplished in addition to full-time teaching: painting classrooms, starting gardens, learning Spanish, leading adult classes and more. I've received various phone calls from school directors raving about the new English teacher. (Continued on page 7)



"A new field director for the program, Alexis Miesen, has already been selected."

New Marshall Islands Program

WorldTeach's newest program, in the Marshall Islands, is now accepting volunteers for July 2002. The Congress of the Marshall Islands, the Nitijela, allocated \$200,000 for WorldTeach to provide full scholarships for 20

volunteers to teach English in their public elementary and high schools for the coming academic year. A new field director for the program, Alexis Miesen, has already been selected from a highly qualified applicant pool. Alexis was a volunteer to Namibia in 2000. Although the program

and scholarships have been announced for only three weeks, already nearly half the positions have applicants. WorldTeach will provide teachers to help implement a new national policy that English will be the primary language of instruction beginning in grade one.

Alumni Network

Have you ever caught yourself saying, "I wish I had kept in touch with the other volunteers in my group."? Or "I wish I could get back in touch with WorldTeach." GIVE ME A CALL!! 1-800-483-2240.

I am looking for a volunteer from every WorldTeach crew in our 15 year history to represent their group in the alumni network. This **group liaison** would be the link between their group and the office, they would disperse current news of WorldTeach programs and would be responsible for keeping track of the volunteers from their year. It's actually a very exciting responsibility. You can make this happen for all the members of your group!

Thank you in advance!
Ellen Whitman, Admissions and Alumni Coordinator

From the Volunteers

Hello from Waldfrieden in Omaruru! For the past three weeks I have been living at Waldfrieden Primary School, 15km outside of Omaruru in Damaraland. The school has 400 students and only 10 teachers, which is quite problematic.

I must say though that I am having a great time, and of course I am learning so much about education in under-resourced and overcrowded schools. Most of the students at Waldfrieden stay in the two hostels, which is amazing to me! I don't think I would have survived grade 1 if I were to leave home and study in a foreign language. Waldfrieden is also a Mission school under the administration of Benedictine Monks. There are presently two Fathers and two Brothers as well as two Postulants. They pray 6 times a day in addition to having Holy Mass every Wednesday night and Sunday morning. All the students and the workers on the farm attend the Holy Masses (Waldfrieden is also a very big farm with lots of workers who live in what is called "the location", the place where Blacks live). People get so dressed up and the children sing their hearts out. I learned very quickly that when tired of trying to teach, have the children teach you a song.... They will sing for hours on end and each song has its own choreography. And yes, I have also been

attending Church! I am staying in the guesthouse with two other girls, one is from Germany, and the other one is Namibian. So I have great company! I have my own private room with bathroom. Everything in the room is new, and there is a water-heater in each room. We also have a small kitchen, but we don't use it often since the Brothers' cook also cooks for us. Our only duty is dishwashing...I am certainly not complaining. I have a new found appreciation for bread and cheese! Breakfast consist of, you guessed it, bread and cheese. For lunch we usually have rice, porridge of maize meal (Oshithima for the Owambo people), and lots of meat; and the same for dinner with bread and cheese. Lots of cool drinks, or for you on the other side of the Atlantic, sodas. I am eating so much that I took up running...at least I tried to take up running but I find myself running 20 metres (10mX2) and walking the rest of the way! Weather! Well saying that it is hot is putting it mildly. The first week I was here, the nights and early mornings were actually cold. Now, it has all changed. Everyday the teachers and students have a pray before class, and everyday they ask for rain.... It's only rained 5 times and 4 of those times it only drizzled for all of 10 minutes! And they say it's the rainy season...

- Gaelle Simon, Namibia '02

Selections from the Chronicles of Mirabella By

Jeff Miller

So far, things in town have been going very well, and the folks of Marbella are all excited to have me. I am having a bugger of a time trying to figure out 150 names, the likes of which I have never heard. You would think that the locals have it a

bit easier, them only having to learn one name and all. Quite the contrary. Even though Jeff is only four simple letters, it has proved an impossible puzzle for the locals. IT comes out sounding a lot like "Yeef", or "Yif". or even "Ufh."

I have started introducing myself as "Jeff, like Jeff Agoose" This works well and everybody now understands because Jeff Agoose, a soccer player for the US national team is known to about 95% of the Costa Rican population. In the US, I doubt even 5% of the population has heard of Mr. Agoos. Those who don't call me Jeff agoose call me Teacher or "Blanco" which means white.

"I have learned very quickly that when tired of trying to teach, have children teach you a song. . . ."

Continued from the Chronicles of Mirabella (page 3)

While I came here to teach, I feel like I am doing a lot more learning than teaching right now. I recently took up the sport of fishing here in Marbella. I never fish at home, but even if I did I would have had to learn from scratch here because it is so different. Nobody uses poles...those are only for "rich Gringos". Instead they use a contraption which is basically a bunch of fishing line wrapped around a sanded shingle. Additionally, they don't use bait. I was more than a bit skeptical when I headed out for my first sojourn to Concabas, the local fishing beach. The Ticos do not seem to have any problems with their fishing methods, in fact, they are amazingly adept at it. They pull in so many fish with such ease it is like they were hunting in a zoo. I however, am absolutely horrific. For three weeks I managed to do nothing except catch rocks and loose my dad's fishing hooks. All that change! d yesterday when I had an amazing day. Not only did I get to watch pods of dolphins playing together in the surf as the sun was setting over the sea, I actually provided our family with dinner. 4 fish...a veritable jackpot for me who had previously caught nothing. If nothing else Concabas is beautiful. It is a beautiful beach with ebony sand, large rock outcroppings that stretch into the sea, and a virtual zoo of sea life. I often feel like I am living out a Monet painting. As I stand on the rocks and throw my glorified shingle into the water, I often find my self enjoying the kind of sublime moment that reassures me that I am exactly where God wants me right now.

Jeff Miller Costa Rica 2002

News from Yantai, China (continued from page 1)

Apparently, semester schedules do not exist in their system and school activities like examinations are planned a day or two before they happen.

This is China! The one-liner that kept past volunteers survive situations they can never understand and will never find answers to.

Orientation seemed to have

done them good because they take these predicaments in a stride.

After a month, they are not bothered by these anymore and accepted things as they happen. They are the foreigners in Yantai and would rather not impose their ways to the locals. Instead of getting annoyed, they have managed to become

more creative and resourceful in finding alternative ways to enjoy their 6-month stay in Yantai.

[Aileen Lainez, Field Director](#)



Program News From WorldTeach

Director for new Marshall Islands program

After receiving an astonishing number of applications for the position of field director in this little known Pacific island country, we are delighted to announce the appointment of Alexis Miesen as WorldTeach's first Field Director in the Marshall Islands. We welcome Alexis to the team of dedicated field staff who work so hard to support volunteers and to ensure that WorldTeach is meeting the needs of host schools and communities in their country.

A resident of Boston, Alexis is currently working in and studying social work and public health. Alexis was a WorldTeach volunteer in Namibia in 1999 and 2000. During her two years of service she taught at the Rossing Foundation's community education center in Ondangwa in northern Namibia, where she designed ESL curricula and lead community outreach programs.

Alexis was struck by the potential of young people in the region but recognized a need for extra resources to enable and encourage them--young women especially--to reach that potential.

Alexis worked with community leaders, the media, and educational institutions to raise thousands of dollars to establish "Rise and Shine," a scholarship fund to enable young women from the Oshana region to afford books and further their education at the University of Namibia. Recipients of the scholarship must themselves contribute to community development and efforts to improve the lives of others. Alexis pioneered the idea of the women's scholarship fund when she realized that the best way to invest in the community was to invest in the people who lived there, and particularly in those who needed support the most. This pioneering spirit will serve Alexis well when she arrives in the

Marshall Islands this June. She will be responsible for setting up the first WorldTeach program in the country, and for training the first group of volunteer teachers when they arrive later in the summer. WorldTeach has been invited by the Ministry of Education to assist with the implementation and development of a program to introduce English as the medium of instruction from grade one. With one of the lowest standards of education in Micronesia, the Marshall Islands needs help with ESL teaching, teacher training, and activities that will encourage communities to take a more active interest in education. Alexis will work closely with the Ministry as her first group of

WorldTeach volunteers teach at the elementary and high school level, some in urban areas and others on the outer islands. This new program in the Marshall Islands presents a rare opportunity for WorldTeach volunteers to see how a small developing country operates and to contribute to improving educational opportunities for its children. There are 20 scholarships to cover the full fee for this program, which departs in late July and requires a one-year commitment. For more information see the Programs section of the website. We are seeking more volunteers so please help us spread the word by telling your friends/family/co-workers about this unique opportunity.

[Harriet Wong is the Program Manager in Cambridge, MA](#)

WorldTeach in India

WorldTeach is exploring the possibility of sending a small number of summer volunteers along with the field director to a Buddhist monastery in Northern India near the town of Bodilla, where they care for 200 orphans. Two monks from the monastery approached WorldTeach with the request that we send volunteers to teach English, math, and science to the children in this monastery as well as to a second several miles away.

News from Costa Rica (continued from page 2)



Regardless of their experience in education, the volunteers have been consistently praised for their dynamic and interactive approach to TEFL. Host families have been equally complementary of their newly adopted sons and daughters from the United States.

The volunteers will be gathering in May for

their in-service conference, and I'm excited to hear more about their adventures of the first few months as well as their plans for the next leg of the journey. I'm sure there will be lots of similar tales about wild students, stomach problems, mixed-up Spanish conversations and big bugs, plus many unique perspectives on

life in rural Costa Rica and how to succeed at it. Whatever the secret, so far so good!

Kate Miller, Field Director

News from Namibia (continued from page 1)

"This effort will leave 151 Namibian children with invaluable experience"

In 2001, Viktoria launched a newsletter, *The Carnivore Times*, to which almost 2,000 Namibian children have thus far subscribed. This year Viktoria is focused on evaluating her work and broadening her impact even more through service as secretary of the Namibian Environmental Education Network.

Last year, Amy Smego joined Viktoria to manage AfriCat School Outreach.

Now in her second year as a WorldTeacher with AfriCat, Amy has launched the Caring for the Earth Community, which is deepening the impact of AfriCat's outreach program. Amy has selected, based on interest and commitment, six schools from all over Namibia with whom to coordinate environmental projects of each school's choosing. Thus far four schools have chosen to develop recycling projects.

This effort will leave 151 Namibian children with invaluable experience in creating and managing an environmental project.

Viktoria and Amy bear witness to the great work WorldTeachers are accomplishing throughout Namibia, as well as to the deepened impact volunteers can make by extending their service. Tune in next month to read about what our two other returning volunteers, Molly and Amelia, are achieving in their second years of service!

News from Ecuador

The El Niño weather phenomenon has returned and it seems like no one was prepared again. There is flooding all along the coast, but only two volunteers have had to buy rubber boots.

This did not hold back the beachgoers who traveled to the coast for Holy Week. Many people from the Sierra travel on the Thursday and Friday before Easter.

The television was flooded with specials called "Life of Jesus", "the Real Life of Jesus", "Judas", "Jesus Christ Superstar", even cartoons about Easter for the kids. People eat a special dish called Fanesca around this

time. It is a kind of fish stew containing many different types of grains and beans. As is normal for this time of year, volunteers have dispersed throughout the country and beyond in search of adventure during their semester break. They have gotten as far as Peru, Brazil, Cuba and the Caribbean islands.

Also a typical series of events have occurred with the advancing of an election year. As of now, there are five candidates for president, but that could climb to as many as ten. All powerful mayors are boasting the accomplishments made under their terms of office, just in case they run again or run for a higher office. Citizens in general as well as politically active students have taken over oil companies and universities demanding better services from the government. Protests have calmed and roads have cleared, but as prices continue to rise with inflation, the same things will most likely happen next year. Volunteers from September 2001 are quite settled and most have found a niche and are making many discoveries about themselves and their surroundings. I am just about to receive three more volunteers for our April 2002 group and guide them toward creating positive experiences.



As Field Director and having lived in Ecuador before, I expected to find a niche right away. It turns out that I found it just recently after having been here for about seven months. I decided to join a percussion ensemble (Tambores y Otros Demonios) to add on to my over 15 years of experience with all types of percussion. They rehearse two buildings away from where the WorldTeach office is. I was afraid at first to integrate myself as a foreigner and a woman. After the first rehearsal and having shown the group a few things I know about Brazilian rhythms, they were so appreciative and started to call me "maestra" (teacher). They now dedicate every Thursday rehearsal to me and Brazil. Having been an administrator for more time than a teacher, I had forgotten how much I enjoy teaching. It just feels like I am sharing something that gives me great joy.

Sometimes it really takes courage to become part of and add something to the world around you.

No matter how unfamiliar the environment is at first, I believe it is worth it to jump in because we all have something to teach.

Happy Greetings from Ecuador

Karen Green, Field Director



WorldTeach Field Directors needed For our Summer Programs in Ecuador and Costa Rica

Scope of Responsibility: The Field Director is responsible for the day-to-day management of the WorldTeach program in the assigned country, as well as the ongoing support and oversight of its volunteer participants and host institutions.

Field Directors are responsible for adhering to all WorldTeach policies, standards and procedures as outlined in the most current personnel and field staff manuals, mindful that our highest priority is the safety and well being of WorldTeach volunteers during the course of their service.

For a full job description, please consult our web page under "jobs"

More news from the office

WorldTeach Video:

The WorldTeach video is now being sent to all accepted WorldTeach volunteers so they will have a better idea of the WorldTeach experience. It has also been sent to the career services offices in approximately 100 colleges and universities.

Welcome to the Board!

WorldTeach is pleased to announce that Devesh Kapur has joined the Board of Directors of WorldTeach. Dr. Kapur is an Assistant (check this out...) Professor of Government at Harvard University; his specialty is the Indian sub-continent. WorldTeach is fortunate to have such a distinguished scholar join its Board.

Retiring:

Jaleh Khadem is retiring from her position as Honorary Consul for Ecuador in Boston. Jaleh has been a great friend to WorldTeach. She has made obtaining visas very easy. All who have gone to Ecuador with WorldTeach the past several years have had their visas processed by Jaleh. Now WorldTeach send visa applications to the Embassy in Washington, DC or New York. We will miss our visits with Jaleh's, but will know of her continuing support of our program.

In Memorium:

WorldTeach volunteers and staff were deeply saddened to hear that Namibia 2000 volunteer Matthew Sims passed away in January 2002. Matt's parents report that his time in Namibia was some of his happiest. A memorial fund in his honor has been established by his parents and friends. This fund will help cover the cost of extensions for Namibia volunteers who wish to spend a second year in the program there.