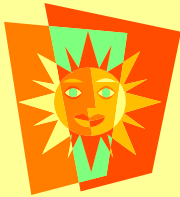




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Volunteering in: China, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guyana, Marshall Islands, Namibia Pohnpei, Poland, and South Africa.



## Happy Birthday, WorldTeach!

WorldTeach turns **20** this year!

Keep your eye out for a special 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition of the Dispatch this December. In the meantime, submissions and photos of WorldTeach past & present are welcome. As always, email [alumni@worldteach.org](mailto:alumni@worldteach.org).

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## WorldTeach and Wonder Bread: Help WorldTeach become a Household Name

It's only natural that your teaching experience in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America or Micronesia will become a part of your conversations once you return home. Even if you're the humble type, shy about singing your own praises in international volunteering, your blank look during a heated group-discussion of Camp Jen vs. Camp Jolie in the Brangelina saga might clue your company in to the fact that you've been out of the country for an extended period of time. And as your companions begin to ask questions about your experiences abroad you might find, surprisingly, that most of them haven't really heard of WorldTeach.

After such an expansive abroad experience, one where your community, school, fellow teachers, and even your friends and family back home are involved with WorldTeach on some level, it's easy to forget that we're a relatively small organization. We focus on providing support to our volunteers in the field, and we're always working on initiatives to improve our organization. We're proud of these developments (see related article, Page 5) because the real value of WorldTeach comes from the excellent standard of teaching and community outreach projects that our volunteers provide in our host countries.

We want WorldTeach to be recognizable and accessible to anyone excited by the prospect of teaching abroad. As a small, academically-based non-profit, we don't have the resources to advertise and market our programs to the public as much as we'd like. So we're hoping to increase WorldTeach name recognition by publishing more volunteer articles and telling more human interest stories about the work WorldTeach volunteers do abroad. **We would love to receive your personal stories, and if you have contacts in media or communications**, we especially need support getting these stories placed in radio, television and print. Please email Amy, [amoran@worldteach.org](mailto:amoran@worldteach.org), or Abbie, [abennett@worldteach.org](mailto:abennett@worldteach.org) with suggestions. As always, thank you for staying in touch!





# WorldTeach Dispatch Summer 2005

## WorldTeach Update: A Field (Staff) of Dreams

WorldTeach would like to introduce eight new members of our field staff this summer. We thank them for the amazing work they have already put in, and look forward to the coming year. Welcome to the WorldTeach family!

As we expand our efforts in **Pohnpei**, Federated States of Micronesia, we are delighted to have **Josh Levy** and **Shannon Saenz** leading our team of volunteers. Josh, the Field Director, began his association with WorldTeach as a program and finance assistant in the Cambridge office. His prior teaching experience ranges from a brief stint in California wine country as a llama trainer to three summers of work as a costumed historical interpreter at Jamestown Settlement in Virginia. Shannon, the Assistant Field Director, was a volunteer with the WorldTeach pilot program in Pohnpei in the spring 2006 semester after teaching middle school English in Illinois. Both Josh and Shannon are teaching full-time in addition to their duties as field staff.

### WorldTeach is proud to announce the winners of The 2006 Journal Contest

- The First Place prize of \$100 goes to **Avi Kramer**, China volunteer 05-06
- Second Place and \$75 goes to **Jeremy Douglas**, Marshall Islands volunteer 05-06
- Third Place and \$50 goes to **Therese Weimholt**, Ecuador volunteer 05-06
- Three runner-up prizes of \$25 each go to **Kati Curts**, China 05-06, **Jessica Farmer**, China 05-06 and **Megan Sloat**, Namibia 03-04

This April we held our first Journal Contest, in an effort to collect stories about daily life in-country. The theme was designed to be personal and open-ended, allowing for volunteers to express their experiences using their own voice. We were overwhelmed by the enthusiastic response and fascinating submissions. As a result, we have expanded the number of prizes and the contest itself will run again in October. What follows is the

WorldTeach veterans **Tamara Greenstone** and **Gillian McClelland** have taken the reigns in the **Marshall Islands**. Tam, the Field Director, taught on Mejit with the 2004 group before working as a language instructor for English Language Institute, a summer program coordinated by the Ministry of Education. During her year away from the RMI, she earned a Post-Baccalaureate in Education. Gillian, the Assistant Field Director, taught grades 3 – 8 on Jaluit with the 2004 group before teaching with the same summer program.

Continued on Page 6



Left: Shannon Saenz with the winners of the FSM Debate Contest

Below: Gillian McClelland and Tamara Greenstone await 43 volunteers at the airport.



winning entry of the April 2006 Journal Contest, along with commentary by the WorldTeach staff. We encourage you to submit your piece for the October contest. Please see below for more details!

Continued next page





# WorldTeach Dispatch Summer 2005

## **Featured Fundraiser:**

### **Good Neighbors Fund Vilcabamba Scholarship**

Kim Priebe, Ecuador 2005, arranged to do a weekly piece published on the front page of the “Neighbor Section” in her local newspaper. Kim explains, “I think that because of its Sunday distribution, people actually have time to read it and have the energy to be interested in a 20 something’s South American pursuits.

“I got them to let me write it by harassing them incessantly, and eventually I think they just caved. I solicited them on the premise that most people in suburban Chicago don’t travel to South America, and there is limited availability about foreign cultures in the newspaper ... and that an honest, first-hand account of a fellow Chicagoan’s experience abroad would be interesting to many readers. Then they paid me and it helped me to finance the trip.

“I think a lot of people have been following my column every week and feel emotionally invested in

Vilcabamba. I am not a great writer but always try and write honestly, which people have noted that they appreciate.”

Through her column, Kim was able to share a bit about life in Ecuador with her Chicago readers. One of Kim’s brightest, most enthusiastic English students, “a little 10 year old girl with coke bottle glasses” dropped out of class because her mom could no longer afford the \$50 semester fee. Shortly after, Kim learned that the waitress at the local restaurant where she ate breakfast every day earned little more than 2 dollars a day to support her two kids.

After admitting her frustration and surprise at the inequity between earning potential and the cost of education in Ecuador, Kim asked her Chicago readers for help. She proposed setting up a scholarship fund of \$1000, and has received nearly \$9000 in donations thus far!

Like many WorldTeach outreach projects, Kim’s scholarship fund was made possible with the support of her community back home – writing about, and otherwise sharing her WorldTeach experience with a broader community created a greater network of support for her outstanding work as a WorldTeach volunteer.

***Congratulations, Kim!***

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## **The 2006 Journal Contest**

### **Winning Submission**

Continued from page 2

#### **Chaling**

by Avi Kramer, China

We land in Beijing at 5:25 a.m. and soon the sun is steaming through the clouds. We get our bags and find the gate for our connecting flight to Changsha. On the plane, I sit next to an old couple whose heads don’t reach the headrests. They share a blue airline blanket and almost disappear in it and their features are small and sharp, their skin is dark and wrinkled, and it looks like they have grown to look the same. The man forcefully pushes the seat in front of him forward so his wife can get to the aisle. Another volunteer sits across the aisle from me—we met in the airport while transporting our luggage and trying to avoid the sketchy men wanting to carry our bags

and get us to pay an “airport tax” at an unmarked counter. Now she is curled up in a blanket, her ears plugged by an iPod, and she is crying. It’s not easy to do what we’re doing.

We are sixty volunteers here to teach spoken English, and amidst everything going on—a world that comes at us through newspapers and computer screens and is endlessly filled with problems and sadness—we just have to trust that we are doing something worthwhile.

Continued on Page 7





# WorldTeach Dispatch Summer 2005

## *Alumni Perspective* **The Immigration Debate and Costa Rica: The Case for Trade and Economic Development**

**By Michael Nunes (Costa Rica '95)**

Recently I was reflecting on the fact that I haven't met many U.S. immigrants from Costa Rica. So I did some research and found that Costa Rica doesn't even make the top 25 list of source countries for U.S. immigration, according to the Center for Immigration Studies. By contrast, Mexico, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, are all in the top 10. The reason for this seems fairly straight forward - relative to other countries in Central America and the Caribbean, Costa Rica is rich! Indeed, a comparison of the UN's trade and development index against the Center for Immigration Studies' ranking reveals an inverse relationship between higher development levels and U.S. immigration - the richer the country, the less likely its citizens are to emigrate to the U.S. This largely intuitive finding should tell policymakers that any U.S. immigration policy would be ineffective without consideration of foreign economic development. To this end, an examination of what has worked in Costa Rica may be instructive.

As a volunteer English teacher in Costa Rica over a decade ago I was amazed at the country's high level of economic development. Cost Rica abolished its standing army in the 1960s, and avoided the conflicts that plagued its neighbors in the 1970s and 1980s. Without the distraction of violent civil wars, Costa Rica was able to invest in education, develop its agricultural sector, cash in on its biodiversity through eco-tourism, and, more recently, attract investment from foreign

technology firms. As a result, Costa Rica now boasts the second largest per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in Central America, and poverty has been substantially reduced. Of the world's countries, the UN Center for Trade and Development ranks Costa Rica 35<sup>th</sup>, ahead of Panama (37<sup>th</sup>) and Mexico (49), and well ahead of its next closest-ranked neighbors, El Salvador and Nicaragua (65<sup>th</sup> and 71<sup>st</sup>, respectively).

Costa Rica's success is in part attributable to its relative openness to trade and foreign investment. Costa Rica established a free trade agreement with Mexico in 1994, and it began to strengthen its economic ties with the United States when it joined the U.S.-Central American Trade and Investment Council in 1998. More recently, Costa Rica participated in negotiations to establish a free trade agreement with the United States, other Central American countries, and the Dominican Republic (CAFTA-DR). Such openness has contributed to robust economic growth; its GDP grew by nearly 4 percent in 2004, and its unemployment rate remains below 7 percent.

In addition to trade, another key reason for Costa Rica's success is its well established social institutions, which provide an important safety net for its people. It was the first country in the world to make education free and obligatory for its people, and since the 1970s, the government has invested nearly 30 percent of its national budget in elementary and secondary education. The investment has produced the most literate and educated population in Central America, which has increased the country's attractiveness to foreign investors. In addition to education, Costa Rica's healthcare system is one of the best in the world.

**Continued on Page 10**

<sup>1</sup>Michael Nunes works for the U.S. International Trade Commission, where he currently serves as the economic advisor to Commissioner Jennifer Hillman. The views expressed in this article are his and do not reflect the views of the Commission, its Commissioners, or WorldTeach.





## WorldTeach Continues its Commitment to Quality

We have, at last, a thorough program for training volunteers in general teaching and TEFL skills. Julia de la Torre, a student at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, wrote the *Teacher Training Manual* and its companion *Volunteer Resource Manual* over the course of the last year. This project was made possible through a grant from the Flora Family Foundation of Menlo Park, CA and is due to the efforts of returned WorldTeach volunteer Marianne Gimon. We are deeply grateful to Marianne and to the Foundation for their generous support of this endeavor, and to Julia for her dedication, skill, and hard work in completing this project.

The goal of the program is to ensure that all WorldTeach volunteers receive the same high quality and consistent training across the globe. To create this

manual, we carefully considered the many components of teaching in a foreign country. Our field staff will supplement these materials in a variety of ways—for example, by visiting a local school, by teaching about the national education system, or by discussing specific discipline issues which might surprise new volunteers. As it is, this 45-hour training will serve as the core of our teacher training during in-country orientation.

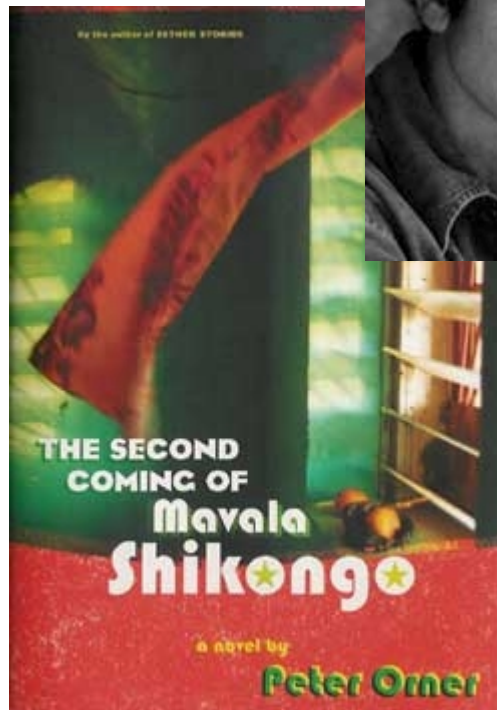
These resources are a much needed and very positive development for WorldTeach. We expect that the introduction of this teacher training program will strengthen the impact our volunteers have in their classrooms. Thus far, we have received rave reviews from field staff and volunteers alike. We look forward to developing a TEFL curriculum book this coming year, as we continue our efforts to ensure quality in the classroom.

*Peter Orner photo courtesy of Marion Ettlinger*



## *Alumni Spotlight:* The Second Coming of Mavala Shikongo

Peter Orner, Namibia '91, has just had his first novel, *The Second Coming of Mavala Shikongo*, published by Little, Brown and Company. *Second Coming* follows Orner's critically acclaimed book of short stories and is based on his experiences as a WorldTeach volunteer. The novel is extraordinary in its portrayal of teachers and residents at an isolated school in Goas, especially because the story does not favor the perspective of protagonist Larry Kaplanski, the American volunteer. All characters in Orner's novel exist within the backdrop of the Namibian veld and are subject to forces of desire and longing, at times outsiders to the small school community which they compose. The experience leaves even the reader who has never set foot in Africa with a visceral sense of the land, and a feeling for relationships that reach far deeper into the human experience than ordinary cross-cultural exchange.





## **WorldTeach Update:** **A Field (Staff) of Dreams** **Continued from Page 2**

In **Guyana** we welcome back **Nancy Clarke**, who served as a volunteer teacher in the original 2005 program. She taught high school science in Bartica, Region VII. As Field Director Nancy will lead the young program to a second year of success!

Team **Ecuador** has also changed ranks, with **Liz Henry** and **Therese Weimholt** assuming the roles of Field Director and Assistant Field Director, respectively. A volunteer in the September 2004 departure group, Liz Henry taught for one and a half years in Ambato before moving to Quito in February 2006 to work as the Assistant Field Director of the Ecuador program. After six months as Assistant Filed Director, Liz took on the responsibilities of the Field Director position. Therese Weimholt, a volunteer in the September 2005 departure group, taught for a year in a high school in Jima, a very small town south-east of Cuenca.

Last but not least, we welcome **Daniel Stolkowski** as Field Director of the **China** program. New to the WorldTeach team, Daniel spent two years working at the Asian Community Development Corporation in Boston's Chinatown. He previously studied Mandarin at Peking University in Beijing, China. Daniel loves karaoke, crossword puzzles, and anything with the word "interpretive" in front of it (i.e. interpretative dance, interpretative cooking, etc). While terrified of the real world, his ultimate dream job is to be a French Fry taster.



### **Field Fun**

*Above Right: Nancy Clarke with the Minister of Education in Guyana*

*Right: Daniel Stolkowski proves his love for karaoke in China.*





## WorldTeach Dispatch Summer 2005

### *Chaling*

by Avi Kramer, China

Continued from Page 3

Jet-lagged, ragged with travel and the new surroundings, I return to the hotel after our first dinner in Changsha. My roommate and I discuss the lousiness of Tsingtao beer, and he tells me that “the coolest kid from philosophy camp always talked about how Pabst Blue Ribbon was named the best beer in America in 1892.” The next day, the first of orientation, we are briefed on aspects of Chinese culture that might be new to us; the first, and most immediate, being squat toilets. My roommate, another gem of a comment, “yeah I know all about that because at sleep-away camp we had to squat in the woods.”

The street from the Ya Hua Hotel to Changsha Number One Middle School is narrow and currently sidewalk-less. The 112 bus bombs down the middle while Fiat taxis cut in around bikers and umbrella-covered food vendors. The alleys smell of rancid water, sweat, and oil frying unsweetened donuts, meat pancakes and “stinky tofu”. There is a force of older men in high-waisted slacks working shirtless in the early morning packing sand dust and rectangular stone slabs to form the new sidewalk. Some work with a bamboo rod stretched across their upper back carrying buckets of wet concrete suspended from each end while others sit on their haunches and watch the events of the street, the ash from their cigarettes blowing away in the wind. I have no idea who employs them, there is no boss or overseer, they just work all day. These are the men building this booming country, on nameless side-streets in unknown cites, on rudimentary scaffolding alongside green-tarp-covered skyscrapers boasting slogans like “an undertaking of great and insurmountable importance.” A man sits on an upturned brick and drinks beer from the bottle with his 7 a.m. noodles and answers his cell-phone that announces the call with Beethoven’s Fifth.

On a free morning during orientation, I run on the

track at the middle school. The school’s team starts to arrive as I’m running, and the boys are stretching while watching me and laughing. As I come around a turn, one of them takes off behind me and runs right on my shoulder, so I push the pace. To be honest, I’m not too happy about this. I came here for a relaxing Sunday run, away from the thousands of people packing Martyrs’ Park to do tai chi, play badminton, walk their caged birds or practice ballroom dancing. So, incidentally, someone nudging into my space is getting on my nerves. I speed up a little more, but his breathing behind me doesn’t labor. Soon, the whole distance group has joined in, and we’re whipping around the track now, the pace dropped to 5:30 or so per mile. They run shirtless, their torsos muscular and glistening with sweat, and they hang in for ten minutes or so before jogging off to the side. I continue on and afterwards share handshakes with them and ask the coach about their training. While we ran, he sat on the side, spitting betel-nut juice and typing text messages.

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***“No matter where I am, there are dogs lurking close by just waiting for a chance to take a big bite out of my exposed calves.”***

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I’ve run in many bizarre places in the world: along the Strait of Magellan, on a highway in the Midwest, beside the Dead Sea, around a horse track in Santiago, Chile, through broken-down colonial towns in Nicaragua. And no matter where I am, there are dogs lurking close by just waiting for a chance to take a big bite out of my exposed calves. They come out of nowhere, a jolting cacophony of barking and scratching paws, and I always feel like a cartoon character bolting away and leaving a poof of dust and a pair of sneakers. Until now, that is, because the dogs in China, incredibly, have achieved some kind of Eastern mind-body equilibrium and peacefulness. They are enlightened beings. I run by, and they do nothing but regard me like “hmm, what do you know, look at that” then lower their heads to their paws and go back to sleep or trot along in search of their next meal.





## WorldTeach Dispatch Summer 2005

### *Chaling*, Continued from Page 7

I am here in Chaling city, Zhuzhou county, Hunan province, China. Over twenty hours by train from Beijing. Picture this: the round, tan bottom of a toddler, his pants around his knees as he pees onto the sidewalk. It is almost too hot to move. A woman in bare feet sorts scallions on the same concrete next to a cage of soon-to-be-eaten frogs while a boy in sandals scrubs a tub of crabs with a brush and sells snakes from a bucket. He takes them one by one by the tail and swings each, smacking their heads against the ground to kill them before placing them in a plastic bag for someone's dinner. All around there are motorcycles weaving through traffic, the trucks' blaring horns and their black exhaust sticking in the air, the afternoon temperatures increasing, the pee trickling along the sidewalk, the smell of fresh blood from the wet market around the corner, firecrackers like gun shots in front of the newly opened bakery, the billowing smoke, the loudness of life and people swarming in every direction. When it gets to be too much, when the man next to me on the bus is blowing his nose in the aisle for the tenth time, I close my eyes and force a smile and hum "You Are My Sunshine."

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*"When it gets to be too much... I close my eyes and force a smile and hum 'You Are My Sunshine.'"*

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I have settled in to teaching at my school in Chaling. Surrounded by poor farming villages; it is a city made up of two commercial streets and that's it, and people four hours north in Changsha don't even know it exists. I am observing one of my Chinese colleagues give an English lesson. She instructs her students to begin a short story with "Once upon a time..." the way, she says, all stories in English begin. I wonder if these students are the future jaded twenty-year-olds playing violent computer games and chain-smoking cigarettes in black, smoked-out internet bars. Will my students do well enough on the college entrance examination, the be-all and end-all in their quest for higher

education, to enter university in Changsha and maybe make it out of Hunan, as so few do, to a higher-paying job in Shanghai or Beijing? Or will their scores not be high enough and will they decide—instead of waiting one year to take the exam again—to ship themselves off to Guangdong for years of living and working in a factory, far away from their families, where they will make the clothes and electronics worn and used by the rest of the world? Where do they exist between the grime of the streets and the starched white tablecloths in the restaurant of the high-rise hotel where a table of alpha males, government officials and school administrators, toast their power and exceptionalness over bottles of liquor that cost half of a teacher's monthly salary? I have students who are dropped off in Mitsubishi SUV's while most have holes in their sneakers and can only afford a wind-breaking jacket during the bone-chilling winter months.

Every day, seven days a week, the students must be on the track for their morning exercises. All the head teachers must be there as well to monitor their class, and the headmaster runs in baby steps around the basketball court next to the infield of the track while circulating four steel balls in his two palms like Lawrence Fishburne in "Boyz in the Hood." He points and shouts at the students who are sleepily lagging behind while a P.E. teacher stands on the stage along track and grunts into the microphone like a drill sergeant. As they run their laps, when each class comes around to the stage, they must chant their military credo in unison. In a country bursting at the seams with people, there is competition for everything, and these students are always pushed towards greater efficiency and accomplishment, to get any edge they can. After running, it's go time, every minute of their day is scheduled until the last study hall ends at ten o'clock at night.

My students have never seen someone not of the Han ethnicity, not even a Chinese minority. Eight months into the year they still sometimes look at

Continued next page





## WorldTeach Dispatch Summer 2005

### *Chaling*, Continued from Page 8

me like they can't believe I really exist. The good students, of course, don't need monitoring, but the boys in the back of the classroom sleep or play with their pocket dictionaries which I confiscate every five minutes. But they perk up with the mention of music or the NBA. On this day, they want me to teach them Backstreet Boys (Hou Jie Nan Hai) songs. They've never heard of Madonna, 50 Cent, or The Beatles, and I hope it doesn't break their hearts when I tell them I don't know any Backstreet Boys songs and ask, aren't the Backstreet Boys like fifty years old now? They stare at me, expressionless, so I tell them the group is now called the Backstreet Old Men (Hou Jie Lao Ren) and my poor tonal pronunciation gets them erupting in laughter.

We are together so much—in the classroom, on the basketball court, huddled up in an English corner, each a short respite from the barrage of pressure that makes up their everyday. It's to give our time in this way, to be challenged each day in front of classes of seventy, to meet and befriend and remember individuals in this 4,000-student school, to give them their first introduction to other people of the world. And they will remember me.

### *Why we liked this piece:*

Avi gave us just what we asked for: an overview of his WorldTeach experience. He chose to recreate his experience in short vignettes, including plenty of sensory details of his experience. Observation of color, smell, feeling and the writer's internal reaction go much farther in writing than detailing everything that 'happened.' Sensory details should accompany physical movement throughout the scene. Less is more. Avi focuses his opening on arriving in a new place, with particular attention to the people around him. Ultimately, this is what his piece is about: observing and then interacting with the people of China, specifically his students.

### *Congratulations Avi!*



Enter WorldTeach's **Journal and Photo Contests**, scheduled for October 15<sup>th</sup> 2006, and April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

❖ Cash prizes for the Journal Contest include **\$150 for first place, \$100 for second place, \$50 for third place and publication on a special section on our website.** We're looking for a 2-5 page (double-spaced) piece that best encompasses your WorldTeach experience. Your submission can be based on notes, emails, letters home ...

*Check out last April's Journal Contest winners by clicking the link on the front page of the WorldTeach website.*

❖ Cash Prizes for the Photo Contest are **\$75 for first place, \$50 for second and \$25 for third place.** The theme for the 2006 photo contest will be **Community**. Send us any great photo you feel encompasses this vision!





# WorldTeach Dispatch Summer 2005

## **Alumni Perspective:** **Immigration in Costa Rica** *Continued from Page 4*

As a percentage of GDP, government healthcare expenditures exceed 9 percent. The country's hospitals all have state of the art equipment, and health coverage is available to all its citizens. As a result, the country's life expectancy is the best in the region, and its infant mortality rate is lower than the rate in the United States! From a development perspective, studies show that a strong healthcare system is vital in keeping people out of poverty. Put another way, as trade and economic growth help people emerge from poverty, access to good healthcare keeps people from backsliding into poverty.

Costa Rica's example should send a strong signal to policymakers that a U.S. immigration policy needs to also focus on international economic development. To this end, the U.S.

should consider strengthening its trade policy to make it more balanced. This means, for example, that the U.S. needs to begin dismantling decades-old agricultural subsidy programs that unfairly give U.S. farmers an advantage in the global market place. It also means that U.S. trade agreements need to contain strong provisions on labor and environment so that we don't continue to lose jobs to countries with cheap labor or lax environmental laws. This would serve to improve wage disparities between the U.S. and developing countries, enabling companies to compete on more equal footing and raising living standards in poorer countries. In addition, the U.S. should consider increasing and targeting its aid on such things as education and healthcare, which would help poor countries develop better social institutions, providing an important safety net for their citizens. With some vision and forethought, lawmakers could get it right by establishing an immigration policy that focuses on international development, thereby addressing the problem at its source.



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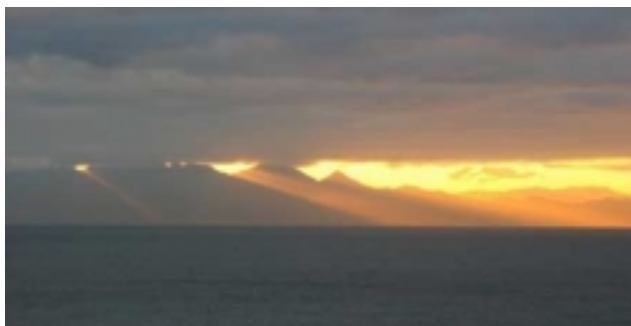
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*Contributing to  
education in developing  
countries since 1986*

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**Interested in  
contributing to the  
next *Dispatch*?**

We are always looking for news about our alumni, photographs, and anything else of interest to other returned volunteers! Please send submissions to [alumni@worldteach.org](mailto:alumni@worldteach.org).



**Simon's Town, South Africa**

*As the sun sets on Summer 2006, we wish you safe travels and best of luck for your fall endeavors.*

