



Natalie Nimmer
University of Hawaii Alumni Ambassador
Marshall Islands '12

Living abroad for a year is an excellent way to challenge your assumptions about the world. In addition, it is such a privilege to be able to live in an indigenous community. Ideally, volunteers will contribute something to the community through their teaching and other activities. In reality, volunteers who go into the experience knowing they will learn more than they will teach are the ones who are most successful and most self-aware.

Many, many evenings I went for a run in the hot Marshallese evening sun. My route ended at my host family's house and we'd spend the next several hours drinking coconuts and talking story, while lounging on mats under the stars. These unremarkable evenings are seared in my mind as a definition of what makes a family. I miss my family every day and am so grateful to still be in regular communication with them.