

Giving Back and Changing Lives

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After several years working in industry, chemical and biomolecular engineering graduates Scott Eklund and Carrie Giordano Eklund decided it was time to contribute to society in another way.



Volunteering with the Peace Corps in Jamaica, Carrie Giordano Eklund worked in a school, promoting health education and implementing adult literacy classes. (Photo from Scott and Carrie Giordano Eklund)

They spent two years with the Peace Corps in Jamaica working on a variety of projects within fishing and agriculture communities near the Caribbean Sea, including some areas that were extremely poverty stricken.

“We wanted to do something that would be giving back,” Scott said.

Carrie, a 2003 alumna, partnered with a local school where she implemented and ran adult literacy classes, developed materials to promote health education and

designed and began construction on a bathroom for the school. Many local townspeople participated in the projects and supported her efforts.

“I worked with some exceptional Jamaicans who were very passionate about the beauty and potential of their communities,” Carrie said.

Of all her achievements, Carrie feels her most significant contribution was teaching a woman to read. The woman began the class reading at the level of a preschooler.

“It's what I'm most proud of, and what continues to motivate me as a teacher,” Carrie said. “It is humbling to know that I helped truly change her life.”

Scott's responsibilities included making improvements to drinking water and sanitation systems and working with the Ministry of Health to track disease outbreaks using Geographic Information Systems and data analysis. He is a 2002 graduate of Tulane.

His most substantial project involved obtaining more than \$100,000 in U.S. grant funding to build four 100,000-gallon reservoirs to collect rainwater and one to harness spring water.

Since their return, the Eklunds have settled in Kalispell, Mont., where Carrie is a high school math teacher, and Scott works as an environmental specialist with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality.

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