We are honored to report that 2013 was Amizade’s most empowering year ever. From pioneering innovative education initiatives in rural Tanzania to renewing a community park in Trinidad, Amizade volunteers spent the year making the world a smaller, safer, and more equitable place. Amizade volunteers came in many forms; as students, faculty, activists, adventurers, philanthropists, and leaders. Young and old, volunteers set out in partnership with Amizade and the communities we work with to serve, explore, and understand. As you scan through this infographic, we invite you to reflect on your own global friendships and how together – through socially responsible service and learning - we will continue to change the world.

Mission
Amizade empowers individuals and communities through worldwide service and learning.

Vision
To create an equitable world where all people can connect freely and forge lasting friendships.

740 volunteers

667 Group Program Participants
25 Open Group Participants
8 Individual Volunteers
40 Service-Learning Course Students

Becky Gailey’s 14-week Individual Placement in Tanzania allowed her to work closely with the Amizade staff and our community partners in Tanzania to design a service-learning experience that met her interests and goals as well as those of the community. While in Karagwe, Becky volunteered with the Women’s and Men’s Emancipation Development Association (WOMEDA), supporting their work researching gender-based violence (GBV) in the region. This is what Becky had to say about her experience:

“The highlight of the project was traveling to 13 different villages and interviewing 145 people. We visited schools, mosques, government offices, health centers and farms to talk with as many people as possible about GBV. The last month here I spent well over 40 hours a week working on the project, but it was a labor of love and I could care less about all those lost hours of sleep and dreadful car rides on back country ‘roads’. The more I talked to people, the more I learned, the more I was drawn into this project. I have heard so many stories that have horrified and outraged me, but I can only hope the work I did will help those who told them to me. Now, my time has come to an end, and as a result of all my work I have a 35-page, 1.5-spaced paper addressing perceptions of GBV in the area and an assessment of how it is currently being addressed.”

Becky Gailey
Individual Volunteer, Tanzania

As part of her program, Becky, along with fellow volunteer Katy Merckel, wrote a project proposal that became The Ota Initiative. Becky returned to Karagwe in late 2013 to help launch the project with the mission to give the children of Karagwe, Tanzania a place to build a foundation of creative and critical thinking skills through arts and science programs.
All nine of us came together during this project into a community of our own. Together we experienced something few will ever get the chance to. As American undergraduates, there were not many places we could have gone, but we were able to do so in a Brazilian clinic. However, the nurses figured out a way for us to be engaged, without overstepping...This program seemed to have a different effect on everyone and strengthened their resolve to become doctors or medical researchers. Not only did we gain invaluable experience, we learned how to think critically about our culture and about service learning programs. We learned that the difference between our cultures were just as important as the similarities and how to respect those differences, even if we did not quite understand them.”

Navajo Life, Culture, and Service Open Group Program

“Amizade’s commitment to positively impacting the community of the Navajo Nation was apparent in the thoughtfulness of the service project and our week’s stay. The activities arranged allowed us insight into a rich culture and the Navajo language. The coordinator, Melissa Woody, went above and beyond her job responsibilities. A proud and compassionate member of the Navajo Nation, Melissa was an ideal coordinator. Her passion and dedication to sharing and preserving her heritage was greatly appreciated by us volunteers. She was always willing to answer any questions and took our inquiries into consideration in shaping the activities planned to address our interests and concerns. In such a short amount of time Amizade provided us with the opportunity to immerse ourselves within the community at a much more meaningful level through working directly with the students of Tuba City Boarding School, needing volunteers to serve with local communities and learn, first-hand, about the challenges of public health in Navajo Life.”

-Slippery Rock University Group Program

“While in Trinidad, the group immersed themselves in the culture of the community of Matelot, Trinidad. They learned about traditional dress and food from local women in the community and hiked through the jungle. The group also served dulce de leche at the Soroca’s Waterfall. It helped transform a beach area into a community park with outdoor classroom, picnic shelters, and play areas. In reflecting on the group’s experience in Matelot, the group leader and organizer, Grace, spoke about the community and their desire to share their home with visitors.”

-Slippery Rock University Grace Evans, leader of the group
Amizade’s 2 new community partnerships in 2012 had an impressive and successful first year

Matelot, Trinidad & Tobago

In 2013, Amizade partnered with Carnegie Mellon University to offer a full semester in India. The 10 students that participated in the inaugural 14-week Social Change Semester took courses and conducted research while designing and implementing service projects in collaboration with local partners, including Amizade’s community partner in India, Visions Global Empowerment. During their time serving with Visions, the students supported the organization’s youth leadership trainings.

Since they first drew up the plans, 27 Amizade volunteers have visited Matelot and worked to make the plan a reality.

Amizade opened up 2 new sites…

Tamil Nadu, India

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Looking forward, Amizade is working with West Virginia University to offer service-learning courses to students that focus on global citizenship, human rights, and education while continuing to partner with Visions Global Empowerment on youth leadership.

Thirty-six Amizade volunteers visited Trinidad & Tobago in 2013. This first year of volunteers worked closely with the Dorcas Women’s Group in Matelot to design and build an ocean-side community park. The first group of volunteers in January of 2013 included Jon Ernest, a landscape architect student from West Virginia University. Jon, along with the Dorcas Women’s Group, local community members, and other Amizade volunteers worked together to devise a plan for the future Matelot Community Park. The plan includes a play area, camping and tent space, a shelter, dining space, an outdoor classroom, and much more.

In 2013, Amizade focused on bringing global service-learning home…
In 2013, Amizade welcomed Volunteer Expeditions into the Amizade family. Volunteer Expeditions has been working in partnership with local community organizations in New Orleans since shortly after Hurricane Katrina. Amizade volunteers are now continuing the work of Volunteer Expeditions, helping the community get back on their feet after the devastating effects of the hurricane.

Following Hurricane Katrina, volunteers and organizations poured into the area and, as a result, the city built and relies on a large volunteer sector. Unfortunately, in recent years, many organizations that depend on visiting volunteers have seen dramatic decreases in volunteer numbers. Recently, many groups and individuals that had been committed to the revival of New Orleans are now seeking out volunteer opportunities in the newest disaster zones. Amizade believes that it is now particularly important to commit to our friends in New Orleans.

Having previously partnered with this Boston-based church in the Navajo Nation in 2011, we were excited to work with them again at one of our newest sites, Appalachia. In the course of the week, the 60 high school students and their 12 chaperones put in over 3,000 service hours to construct the Williamson Community Garden and other projects. As a direct result of this program, tens of thousands of dollars were directly injected into the local community.

Thanks to the hard work of the Amizade staff and partners in Williamson and the enthusiasm and flexibility of the group, this week-long program was a great success.

Program highlights include:

- A training on agriculture at the local orchard
- Construction of 2 compost bins
- Tours of the historic sites of the Hatfield & McCoy feud
- Renovation of a local playground and 2 low-income apartment complexes
- A joint performance by the Belfry Baptist and First Parish group's choirs
- A huge community pig roast with the Mingo County Diabetes Coalition, featuring local bands and community garden plot renters
- Morning runs through Appalachian trails with the local Runner's Club
- Presentations on regional health concerns, the coal economy, and Appalachian culture
- Wood-chopping and gardening tutorials with local farmer, Doug Dudley
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New Orleans
Louisiana, USA

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In 2013, Amizade began an important partnership with the community of Williamson, West Virginia. With our headquarters in Pittsburgh, PA, the Appalachian region is our home and Amizade is thrilled to be able to support the great work of our community partners while sharing the unique culture and beautiful location with Amizade volunteers.

In Williamson, Amizade has partnered with Sustainable Williamson, an organization with a mission to create a replicable, sustainable community model for low-income communities throughout Central Appalachia. Sustainable Williamson’s goals of improving community health, food systems, sustainable energy generation, and local sustainable tourism is being achieved through different service projects. Working alongside local stakeholders, volunteers are helping to achieve long and short term goals as they learn from and experience a culture and community from within. Amizade volunteers visiting Appalachia have worked on projects including farmer’s markets, community gardens, and trail and park maintenance.

FAIR TRADE
LEARNING

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I was on my way to Pittsburgh, a completely unknown city to me. The only thing I knew about Pittsburgh I had learned from my friend Nathan or from watching Batman. Confusion was surrounding me because I didn’t know what to expect. I was headed to Pittsburgh to participate in a Service-Learning program focusing on language and American culture. Language? I was sure this was going to be my undoing. Culture? Honestly, I wasn’t expecting to experience things that would have a real impact on who I am and this wasn’t entirely my fault. Maybe I felt this way because of the cultural industry of today that pre-fabrics and sells “culture”. The media doesn’t allow for out of the box thinking in today’s world. This makes it hard to think differently.

It's only when you have contact with the strange and the new, start experiencing the day to day in a new light within an unfamiliar routine, that we are able to start thinking critically, surprise ourselves with the new, deconstruct myths, build up our learning, and enlighten ourselves with diversity that we are capable of understanding what culture really is. At that particular moment, however, the only thing that I really knew was that the American culture wasn’t really something that fascinated me.

Even as a Portuguese teacher, I knew in theory that learning a new language means learning a new culture. It's in culture we find motivation to learn a new language and I knew that if I didn’t learn a new culture I would fail myself in my goal to learn English. But the real question was, “How can I change my preconceived notions on American Culture?” Is it possible to become enchanted with it without tossing aside my own sense of culture?

I didn’t want to return to Brazil transformed into an American product so my challenge was to discover the middle ground in all of this. It was not just my challenge but it was also Amizade’s.

The United States is a country rich and diverse in culture. The unquestionable proof of this for me was when my Brazilian friends and I compare the different lifestyles of families in the Amish of Lancaster with the lifestyle of people in New York City. I never would have expected to meet people from so many different nationalities: Egyptians, Indians, Bolivians, etc., each with their own way of living so different from one another… Today I know that, the U.S. is the perfect place to expand knowledge, break stereotypes, and remodel concepts.”

-Lidiane Gregory, English Language, Culture & Service in Pittsburgh participant

Mayor Luke Ravenstahl’s Citizen’s Service Award
Proclaiming December 7th, 2012
Amizade Global Service-Learning Day

2013 Western PA Rising Star
Brandon Blache-Cohen

2013 David A. Portlock Outstanding International Educator
Mike Sandy

2013 IARSLCE Early Career Award
Eric Hartman

2013 PennACE Student of the Year
Nonprofit Internship
Grace Evans

2012-2013 Financials
Estimated summarized statement of activities, fiscal year September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2013

Income: $880,777
Expense: $855,588

% of total expenses

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GET INVOLVED

organize a faculty-led program
arrange a group volunteer program
join an open group volunteer program
participate in a service-learning course

Staff

John Mathias Brown
Jamaica

Greg Buie and Meera Pathmarajah
India

Jean Carla Costas
Belivia

Sharron Eticity
Navajo Nation (Crownpoint)

Micah Gregory
Brazil

Matthias Haas
Poland

Rae Horton
New Orleans

Kevin McGuckin
Northern Ireland

Beulah Joseph-Clunis
Trinidad & Tobago

Sam Kayongo
Tanzania

Pastor Chris Nyame
Ghana

Nate Siggers
Appalachea

Suzanne Unger
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Melissa Woody
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