

AMIGOS

Amigos de las Américas

PORTLAND CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

FALL 2011

A 2010 PHOTO OF THE YEAR



Austen Yeager, Nicaragua 2010

INSIDE THIS EDITION

- PRESIDENT'S GREETING
- 2010 VOLUNTEER ESSAYS
- OUR TRAINING TEAM
- SEÑORA JUDY SPRUNGER
- THE 2011 VOLUNTEERS
- THANK-YOU'S
- MORE 2010 PHOTOS



Most of the 2011 Portland Chapter Volunteers

Costa Rica ~ Ecuador ~ Dominican Republic ~ Honduras ~ Mexico ~ Nicaragua ~ Panama ~ Paraguay ~ Peru

PRESIDENT'S GREETING

Dear Friends of AMIGOS, Volunteers, Vets, and Parents:

Amigos de las Américas envisions a world where each young person becomes a catalyst for social change. AMIGOS values include promoting leadership by youth, ensuring health and safety of volunteers and project staff, and maintaining respect in all AMIGOS relationships. AMIGOS provides high quality programs relevant to the communities we serve.

Since 2002, I have had the privilege to work with the youth who are becoming the leaders of today and tomorrow. I am inspired to stay involved in the program by what I see every year. I encourage you to stay involved as well, and you can do that by supporting fundraising, assisting with recruiting and training or joining the Board locally or across the Americas! Want to start a new chapter, join the International Board or International Foundation, or join our Portland team. Opportunities are all around you!



*Peggy Bartelt
Portland Chapter President*

Every year, an infusion of energetic new, youthful-minded supporters helps make the AMIGOS program possible for the next year. Visit the AMIGOS web site at <http://www.amigoslink.org> or www.portlandamigos.org to learn more. You will find inspiring quotes from Guy Bevil, AMIGOS founder, as well communications on summer project updates, photos and video clips of current and past projects, an alumni and chapter bulletin and much more. Want to see about alumni career opportunities? How about links to information about support organizations locally and Latin American Partner Agencies? Read updates from the International Board of Directors and AMIGOS Foundation? Check it out – find how *you* can help to support tomorrow's young leaders. The world needs more AMIGOS!

I want to thank the Portland Chapter 2011 Training team, Liz Carrero, Amalia Benke and Julie Rentz! Although Liz and Amalia are off to new adventures, Liz maintains an AMIGOS presence in the Midwest and Amalia is a Training Director in Washington, DC. A great round of applause goes out to retiring Chapter Board member Tammy Vanderlinden for her years of involvement as a parent and service to the Board!

Welcome to Tim Haley who recently joined the Chapter Board. The Portland Chapter Board members have an amazing wealth of knowledge and years of experience with AMIGOS. Won't you join us to make sure this valuable program maintains a strong presence in the Pacific Northwest?

Finally, we welcome our two Portland Veteran Volunteer Training Directors for 2012! Wyatt Pate was an AMIGOS Vol in Nicaragua, 2006, and Project Supervisor in Honduras, 2011. Laura Nitti was an AMIGOS Vol in Paraguay, 2003, and Project Supervisor in the Dominican Republic, 2006. To have **two** Portland Chapter Veterans leading our **Training** team this year is a testimony to the mission of AMIGOS!

Best, Peggy

PORTLAND CHAPTER BOARD

*PEGGY BARTELT, BRENT CHALMERS, MARK COOKSEY, TED LAMBERT, SHAN LEONARD,
JEAN MALARKEY, DAVID PRIBNOW, DICK STOKES, TAMMY VANDERLINDEN*

2010 ESSAY OF THE YEAR

My Time in Percabe

By Emily Robson

This past summer I was able to spend six weeks in the amazing country of Panama with *Amigos de las Américas*, a program that promotes youth leadership, community development and multicultural understanding between the Americas. I lived with my partner Zoë, from Kansas City, and an older Panamanian couple, who were our hosts in a community called Percabe. They were often out of the house working so Zoë and I had to go out into the community to find more people to hang out with. Within no time, half of the community of 70 people became our family while the other half became some of our good friends. We stayed in the community for the majority of the time and taught classes at the local school about the environment. We also had several projects to work on with the community members. We painted the church inside and out, put two doors on church's kitchen, made seven pews for the church and planted 86 trees.

By doing this program I learned more about myself, the country of Panama, and the world as a whole. I felt connected to the world, like I truly was a part of it. I learned the difference between what we need in life and what things just make life easier. The people in your life mean far more than what you have. You do not need an indoor bathroom or a shower. You do not need to have running water 24/7 or electricity. A latrine and a river can work the same. You can wait for the water to come, and you can always use a flashlight. They all get the job done. I grew as a person and learned more about what it means to be a part of the human race. Zoë and the community became my adopted family for six weeks. They challenged me, were with me through the fun times and the hardships and we genuinely cared about each other.

Some of my favorite memories include: eating Eskimo pies with the kids (a delicious ice cream bar dipped in chocolate); having a community member help make me a beautiful, authentic Panamanian



skirt, which must have taken about 10 yards of fabric, so it can twirl while I dance; struggling with the language yet having the most amazing conversations; and having a chicken lay an egg from the rafter above the latrine and have it hit me in the back while I was using it! I remember bathing in the river and trying to wash my clothes and doing such a clumsy job that a 4-year old girl named Martha finally came to my rescue and showed me the proper technique. She also became my Panamanian little sister and made me smile each day. I will also always remember Javier, a mischievous little boy, who was the source of pranks and jokes that kept me laughing. My host family had a large extended family who accepted Zoë and me as part of their family. We did not have to call ahead before going to a Panamanian house, we could just stop in and become part of the conversation. They allowed us to walk in and become a part of their life.

One of the things I learned from this experience was how to be more easy going and more flexible. Before this past summer I lived on "Emily time" and expected everyone around me to do the same. From living in Panama I realized that "Emily time" does not exist. One of my many memories from this summer is when we would ask people when we could go do an activity and they would reply "ahora" which in English means *now*. Well I quickly learned their "now" has a different meaning and it can mean this moment, in a few minutes, in a few hours or even in a few days. I learned to be more flexible and to wait for the right time for things to happen. (cont'd, p.4)

From my summer I learned how important community service is and how you may be giving them something like a new school room or helping them fill out papers and how you would think they are the ones who have the better end of the deal but in reality you're the one that does. Through hard work you learn to be humble and how easy your life may be compared to theirs.

I feel like my summer with the AMIGOS program has helped me grow up. I was in another country away from my parents, from my friends and from my life for six weeks. I had to deal with not being able to contact my family. I only had one phone call home during my entire trip. I learned that I had to forget about my life back home and make a new one. Now that I am back I can take what I learned through Amigos and integrate it into my life here. I talk to Zoë a lot and we both miss Panama. I have called the community and sent them pictures. Part of my heart lies with the people in my community called Perecabe.

**Excerpts from other
 2010 Volunteer Essays -**

"What actually happened was that when we got to the school, tons of kids were already hanging out and playing outside of the building. The moment we opened the door, they all flooded in. I kid you not, there were at least 60 kids in that classroom, and most of them were under 6 years old. This was a huge surprise and created an issue because the lesson plan my partner and I had created was meant for 3rd and 4th Graders. I was so scared; I've never been expected to lead this many kids before! We both took deep breaths and tried to get creative. ... I feel like the biggest thing I'm getting out of this experience, more than cultural understanding, more than strengthening my Spanish, is finding out who I am."

Jaylin Freeman-Broadous (Nicaragua)

"Besides learning about a new culture, traveling with AMIGOS helped me to find out more about my own identity and values, and I learned a lot about myself and my struggle with feeling like I don't belong. Instead of belonging nowhere, I belong everywhere, because through my AMIGOS experience I have a better sense of the single global community that all people are a part of."

Olivia Cantwell (Paraguay)



**OUR 2011 TRAINERS
 AMALIA & LIZ**

The Portland Chapter was so lucky to have two fabulous AMIGOS Veterans, Amalia Benke and Liz Cazzaro, as our Training Co-Directors for the 2011 Volunteers. Amalia was a Volunteer in Veraguas, Panama in 2007, graduated from Trinity University with a focus in International Studies and Spanish in May of 2010, and then came to us last summer almost directly from Paraguari, Paraguay, where she had just served as a Project Supervisor. Liz launched her AMIGOS career as a Volunteer in Paraguay in 2004, then worked as a Vet Trainer with the Chicago North Chapter in 2005, followed in 2006 by serving as a Project Supervisor in the Dominican Republic. After graduating from Lewis & Clark College in 2009, Liz, like Amalia, wanted to do more with AMIGOS. Liz and Amalia decided to team up last fall to help provide an amazing AMIGOS experience for a new group of Portland Chapter Volunteers. How fortunate we have been!

Liz and Amalia did a great job inspiring and training a core group of Veteran Trainers (see article, below) as well as the 2011 Volunteer group and despite all of the hard work it seems they had a fun and rewarding time doing it! Both received high praise from Chapter volunteers, veterans, parents and board members at the May Going Away fiesta (despedida), the final Training meeting before the vols departed for Latin America. Sadly, neither Amalia nor Liz will be available to train our vols in the coming year. Like so many accomplished AMIGOS, they are both off to pursue dreams that will take them away from Portland. We hope they'll stay in touch and let us know how those new pursuits are going!

(2010 Vol Reflections, continued)

"AMIGOS always stresses that we as volunteers are not there to "help" the people, but rather to work with them and enhance cross-cultural understanding ... Nobody there needs our help; their life is just another way of living. Although most people in the Dominican Republic do not have nearly as many material goods as we do here in the United States, in most cases they have just as much or more to offer us. During my time there everyone taught me so much. One of the biggest things I learned was that people are really the same no matter where they live.... Throughout the summer there were good times as well as harder times, but I know I'm always going to remember my time in La Culata as a very positive experience. I'm never going to forget all of the friends I made there and how people took me into their homes every day and told me how I was part of their family. "

Phoebe Sumner (La Culata, DR)

"I lived with a host family but my partner, Lizzie from Kansas City, and I ate meals in different homes every day. This was how the community shared the expense of hosting us. My host parents, Esnela and David, were both 25-years-old and had 2 sons: Jovel (5) and Esteven (1½). They were incredibly kind and accommodating and I loved living in their home. David works in agriculture, in the various bean fields and cornfields that surround El Coyol. He works 7-hour days and his daily salary is \$3.50.... On a normal day, I usually spent lots of time with my host mother: learning to make tortillas, cooking over an open fire, doing laundry on a rock, or fetching water from the well. We also taught in the school for a few hours every morning, doing activities relating to the weekly theme (Creative Expression, Nutrition, Environment, or Cultural Traditions). We taught pre-school through 6th grade. We ate lunch and dinner with whomever was our host that day, and we spent the rest of our time working on our large project: the Community Based Initiative (CBI). The community members in El Coyol decided that they wanted to build "banquitos" (small benches) for the children to sit on while eating their lunches.... Overall, my summer in Nicaragua was a tremendous success. It was in no way an easy or lighthearted experience. In fact, it may have been one of the hardest things I have ever gone through. At the same time, it is also the most rewarding."

Amanda Yeager (Nicaragua)



REMEMBERING OUR FRIEND, SEÑORA JUDY SPRUNGER

We miss our dear friend and mentor, Judy Sprunger, who succumbed last summer to the cancer that for over a year had kept her away from her classroom and the students she so enjoyed at Cleveland High School. Judy was a dedicated, accomplished and much admired Spanish teacher and leader at Cleveland. She well knew the profound impact that AMIGOS could and would have for many of her students and, taking that to heart, over the years she coaxed nearly fifty of her Cleveland students into the AMIGOS program with our Chapter. Where did her inspiration come from? Judy had a fascinating personal history that first took shape in the Colombian campo with her missionary parents, as described in a feature story in our 2005 Chapter Newsletter. We invite you to read that telling story: <http://www.portlandamigos.org/news/February2005Newsletter.pdf> (see p.8, por favor).

Judy's husband, Lewis, has been a strong, long-time supporter of Portland AMIGOS, too, and we are honored that Lewis felt that one fitting tribute to Judy would be to make contributions to our Chapter in support of future Portland AMIGOS volunteers. We are grateful to those of Judy's family and friends whose generous donations enabled us to create a Judy Sprunger Memorial Scholarship Fund, which will begin providing financial support to deserving Chapter volunteers from Cleveland HS for summer 2012. We celebrate Judy and Lewis' passion for global awareness, community service and education with a focus on Latin America.



WHO ARE THE 2011 AMIGOS VOLUNTEERS?

Thirty-five volunteers from all over the Portland Metro area worked on AMIGOS projects in Latin America beginning in mid-June:

- Camille Adams, Jr, Jesuit HS – Oaxaca, Mexico
- Lynn Bajorek, Jr, Lincoln HS – Matagalpa, Nicaragua
- Allie Baumann, Sr, Cleveland HS – Limón, Costa Rica
- Rose Buchanan, Sr, St. Mary's – Intibucá, Honduras
- Fiona Byrne Jr, St. Mary's Acad – Cusco, Peru
- Max Conlon Jr, Grant HS – Azuero, Panama
- Allie Donahue, Jr, St. Mary's Acad – Cotopaxi, Ecuador
- Rory Driscoll, Jr, Grant HS – Intibucá, Honduras
- Isaiah Elder, Sph, Riverdale HS – Oaxaca, Mexico
- Emma Gosser, Jr, Sunset HS – Cotopaxi, Ecuador
- Sierra Green, Sph, Riverdale HS – San Juan, Dominican Republic
- Isabel Harger, Jr, Tigard HS – Matagalpa, Nicaragua
- Erik Iversen, Sr, Grant HS – Boaco, Nicaragua
- Amy Lamson, Jr, Lincoln HS – Intibucá, Honduras
- Anna Learn, Sph, Grant HS – Oaxaca, Mexico
- Caitlin Monahan, Jr, Jesuit HS – Azuero, Panama
- Molly Moran, Jr, Central Catholic – Coclé, Panama
- Allison Nasson, Sph, St. Mary's Acad – San Juan, Dominican Republic
- Sam Nichols, Jr, Cleveland – Matagalpa, Nicaragua
- Julia Read, Jr, St. Mary's Acad – Boaco, Nicaragua

AWESOME VET TRAINERS!

Thanks so much to our Vet Trainers Carly Burton, Jaylin Freeman-Broadous, Katie Alto, Liv Reynoldson, Olivia Cantwell, Rose Buchanan and Jennifer Kearns for being so dedicated to AMIGOS and for putting faith into our current volunteers and exciting them about their summer ahead! All of our Vet Trainers were volunteers with AMIGOS within the past few years, serving in countries from Paraguay to the Dominican Republic, to Panama, Costa Rica, Mexico and Honduras. Amalia Benke has written: "As Training Directors, we [she and Liz Carraro] value their input and love the constructive feedback they give us when planning and facilitating training. Because each Vet Trainer's experience as a volunteer was different, they provide a wide array of insight about everything from community planning to fundraising in order to be able to buying soccer jerseys for the local youth.

The Chapter has come to rely on AMIGOS Veterans from the Portland area to strengthen and enliven our training program. Liz noted that "we are always looking for additional training help. When Volunteers return to the US, they should reach out to [Chapter leaders] if interested in helping out with training at all. It's a great way to stay involved with the organization and to make sure the things you learned get passed on to the next generation of volunteers."



Some of Our Vet Trainers hard at work during their Vet Trainer's Training

PREVIOUS PORTLAND CHAPTER NEWSLETTERS –

Please follow this link to past editions of our Newsletter: <http://www.portlandamigos.org/news/>

Xavier Rentz, Jr, Southridge HS – San Juan, Dominican Republic
 Avalon Reynolds-Brice, Sph, Grant HS – Coclé, Panama
 Annie Rohlf, Sph, St Mary’s – Intibucá, Honduras
 Gretchen Rude, Sph, Metro Learning Cntr – Oaxaca, Mexico
 Hallie Ruttum, Jr, Lincoln HS – Azuero, Panama
 Clara Schneid, Jr, St. Mary's Acad – Paraguarí, Paraguay
 Emily Seynaeve, Sph, Vancouver School of Arts and Academics – Oaxaca, Mexico
 Emily Stiles, Sph, St. Mary's Acad – Boaco Nicaragua
 Carly May Tester, Jr, Arts & Communications Magnet Acad – Cotopaxi, Ecuador
 Ruby Vandel, Jr, Grant HS – Paraguarí, Paraguay
 Rachel Wald, Jr, Lincoln HS – Intibucá, Honduras
 Ashley Watkins, Jr, Grant HS – La Paz, Honduras
 Grace Weaver, Jr, Cleveland HS – Cotopaxi, Ecuador
 Zoe Wilson, Sr, Beaverton HS – Paraguarí, Paraguay
 Emily Wright, Jr, Grant HS – Limón, Costa Rica

The AMIGOS summer was amazing!

MUCHAS GRACIAS –
to a few of our wonderful supporters !

Dave – Café Mango

Don Geddes – Walsh Construction

Albina Rotary

Tim & Lisa Robson – Storables

Willamette Sailing Club

*Also, a huge and heart-felt
 Mil Gracias to our incredible
 Presidente, **Peggy Bartelt,**
 from her co-Board members!*

2011 VOLUNTEER TRAINING/SERVICE UPDATE

Back in April, several of our Volunteers celebrated Global Youth Service Day by working with other metro teens out at Supa Fresh Farm, an urban Youth Farm located in Tigard. We heard they had fun! Training Co-director Liz Carraro noted that “they loved having us on the farm and were very open to having people return to volunteer there.” Sounds like it will be a good opportunity for the Chapter again next year. It was a bit wet when the Portland Chapter AMIGOS Volunteers held their final training retreat early in May, but the two-night, adventure at Walter Magness Memorial Tree Farm in Sherwood was a big success. The group trained hard, spoke lots of Spanish, ate good food, explored, pulled invasive ivy from the trees and enjoyed fine campfires and good sleeping, despite the all-wood beds. Later in May, the Volunteers and their parents got together with Trainers, Liz and Amalia, and several Vet Trainers and Board members for a Going Away fiesta – a grand affair! The Volunteers got their airline tickets, their classy blue AMIGOS shirts, their travel instructions and visas and their cots, their summer beds. Within a few weeks they began flying out to their project countries. And now? Now they’re all back in Portland, having completed their summer projects! Volunteers, parents and board members all gathered for a fine Return Party in late August to celebrate and hear about the Volunteers’ adventures! (More about our 2011 Volunteers will appear in our next PCN edition.)



Costa Rica ~ Ecuador ~ Dominican Republic ~ Honduras ~ Mexico ~ Nicaragua ~ Panama ~ Paraguay ~ Peru

A
2010
PHOTO
OF THE
YEAR



Kristen Berry, Nicaragua 2010

SUMMER 2010 - MORE PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Phoebe Sumner – La Culata, DR



Kristen Berry – Ecuador



Olivia Cantwell – Paraguari, Paraguay



Isabel Jones – Cotopaxi, Ecuador



Katie Alto – Paraguari, Paraguay



Emily Robson – Peregabe, Panama