EngageAR

Member and Alumni Stories

Sharing their inspirational stories of AmeriCorps service and life after.

AmeriCorps Alumni:
Christina King

Hometown:
Salem, Arkansas

Service Site:
Community Service, Inc.

What were you doing before AmeriCorps?

Before AmeriCorps I was studying at Arkansas Tech University double majoring in Psychology and Rehabilitation Science with a minor in Social Services. It was during a United Way meeting that I heard AmeriCorps would be coming to Russellville. I was in the first cohort to graduate from the program in May 2019.

What made you decide AmeriCorps would be a fit for you?

My six brothers and I went to high school in Salem, Arkansas which is a town of 1,600 people. It was in this small town where we started to understand the importance of community. Since then I have always prioritized being active in a community because it is important to be a part of something bigger than yourself. AmeriCorps allowed me to be a part of and contribute to the Russellville community. I had mentored youth in college when I worked at Arkansas Governor's School. Americorps allowed me to continue to mentor youth, but this time in a different setting.

Christina with fellow Community Service, Inc. AmeriCorps members.

What part did your AmeriCorps experience play in what you do currently?

I was looking for experience teaching and tutoring in academics. My goal was to move abroad and teach English. While I was mentoring and tutoring in AmeriCorps I was also taking an online course through International TEFL Academy to get my TEFL certification. To gain experience in the classroom I also did some substitute teaching during my service. My time in AmeriCorps has helped me in my current role as an international teacher. During my time volunteering I learned how to be creative and flexible with different teaching approaches, how to set goals with individuals, and how to be adaptive to the individual's needs. These skills helped guide me to be a better teacher. I am also a better employee as I gained insight working with different agencies and realized how each has a unique way of working towards a solution. It is important to respect and learn from different approaches, to gain unity as we work towards a common goal, and to help bring new ideas to the table so that we may reach the goal more effectively.

What made you decide AmeriCorps would be a fit for you?

Americorps offers many opportunities. The experience gives a person insight into their community as well as insight into one's self. Individuals will gain a better idea of what opportunities might exist for them in that city or that career path. I would recommend others to consider joining AmeriCorps- you never know what awaits you, how you can be impacted, and how you can impact others.

My travels since AmeriCorps
and my hopes for the future...

My first day at Chora Chori Nepal we went on a hike and for a few minutes we lost our path, however, I was in no hurry to find it again. It was the most beautiful place to be lost with the most beautiful people. The Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) is located in the picturesque hills and I was hiking with children who seemed to enjoy my company as much as I enjoyed theirs. NGO's brave mission is to find Nepali children who were taken from their homes to India and reunite them with their families. I have a great deal of respect for all the courageous staff members. I could not believe I was so lucky to get to volunteer here. For the past four years I dreamed of traveling to Nepal. It was my first time to leave the United States. My duties at the NGO were to help organize different art activities, sports, and games in the children's free time. During the school days I would help teach the children English lessons.

When it was time for me to leave I was sent off with gifts and well wishes. The goodbye was as warm and loving as the initial "namaste" and all the greetings in between. I am grateful I was able to meet such sincere people who I am so proud and honored to call them my family.

Now I am teaching the cutest children in Nanjing, China. First, I had training in Beijing for two weeks and I was awarded one of the "model trainees". I am learning how to improve my teaching skills. I am so grateful for the opportunities that are here. One of the examples is the opportunity to join the ballroom dancing with the elderly of the community. They believe in staying active. I am so thankful they have welcomed me into the group.

What are your plans for the future?

The future goals: I start salsa classes next month. I will return to the Great Wall of China a second time in May. I am so grateful that I will to explore more of the world and meet such amazing people. For Christmas I was able to visit one of my high school best friends in Seoul, Korea. This current holiday season I am visiting my university best friends in Vietnam and Japan. In the spring I will apply for the PeaceCorps and the Fulbright so that I can return to Nepal and teach English. This year I will study the GRE so that I can go to graduate school. I will apply for the Rotary Scholarship to study abroad. It amazed me when I discovered the current US Ambassador of Nepal Randy Berry also studied abroad on the Rotary Scholarship! I hope to follow in his footprints and make an impact on the World.

Link for Chora Chori Nepal: www.chorachori.org.uk/

EngageAR is a collaborative programmatic initiative to create a culture of service in Arkansas that permeates activities of family, education, business, government and the nonprofit.

EngageAR believes local communities know best how to solve local problems. The staff work to develop partnerships within government agencies, municipalities, institutions of education, and the nonprofit and faith-based sector, developing and promoting civic engagement to undergird the services offered through public agencies.

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For more EngageAR AmeriCorps member stories, visit www.volunteerar.org/National-Service

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