



# YALE ALUMNI SERVICE CORPS

## Spring 2016 Newsletter

### A Message from Puneet Batra '02 MS, Yale Alumni Service Corps Chair

Dear Volunteers, Alumni and friends;

After every trip, I am humbled to see the incredible work our volunteers are able to accomplish. Most recently, our group was in Serra Grande and they overcame numerous obstacles (a teacher's strike and the very real worry of Zika, for example) to selflessly give their time and energy to the community with real impact. The personal connections that are formed on each trip, between volunteers, between volunteers and community members and between community members further solidifies my belief in the value of these trips. Later this summer, our volunteers will return to Yamoransa. For many volunteers this will be their first time in Yamoransa (and likely, in Ghana); for some of our repeat volunteers this will be their 2nd/3rd/4th/5th/nth trip back. Either way, I am certain that the community and our partners are looking forward to welcoming the group and we will only build on and strengthen these relationships further. Our impact may be small at a macro level but at a micro level, the impact is lasting; And, amid a sea of local, national and international discord it is heartening to see the lengths our volunteers go to to make a difference in the lives of their fellow travelers and their host communities. Thank you.

### Yale Alumni Service Corps 2016 Program to Serra Grande, Bahia (March 11-20, 2016)

Led by Nadya Zawrocki and organized in partnership with Instituto Floresta Viva, the Universidade Estadual de Santa Catarina (UESC), the Environmental Leadership Training Initiative (ELTI), and the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Sciences (FES), the Yale Alumni Service Corps recently traveled with a group of 73 Yale alumni, students, family, and friends to Serra Grande in Bahia to a new service site. A group of 60 students from UESC provided invaluable interpretation and media assistance throughout the program. Serra Grande is an oasis of breathtaking natural beauty, significant biodiversity, and abundant natural resources but as with many underserved communities around the world, this does not translate into economic resources for its residents.

In Serra Grande,

- Judy Crawford '76 and Trudie Agbozo '05 organized the education team that taught in the primary and secondary schools,
- Perry Sayles '88 led the mural painting in the local library,
- Bill Rossbach '71 and Phil Sussler '79 led the group working on environmental conservation through educational programs,
- Cheryl Davis '76 organized the public health team that worked on education and organized an eye glass distribution clinic,
- Andrew Garling '68 guided the construction team that built tables and benches for the praça,
- Ann Nock and Jeff Harlowe '77 managed the team that provided business consulting services and taught financial literacy classes, and
- Wayne Caccamo '87 SOM led volunteers providing a wide array of athletic activities for the local children.



YASC group photo with UESC student



World Cup Serra Grande 2016

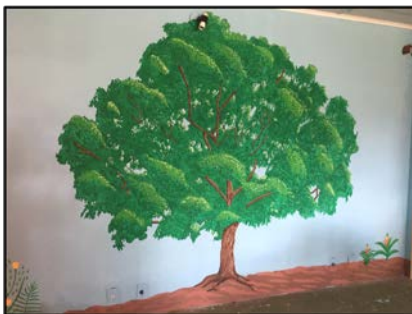


Children of Serra Grande

## Yale Alumni Service Corps 2016 Program to Serra Grande, Bahia (March 11-20, 2016) - continued



YASC volunteers during home visit



Mural painted in school library



Paulo from Floresta Viva and Marcelo from UESC

More than ever, we owe the success of the program to the amazing group of YASC volunteers whose hard work and dedication is nothing short of extraordinary. Here is what made this trip so special in the words of our program participants:

*Everything - The natural beauty of the overall location; the peaceful nature of Serra Grande; the ideal setting for part of my project ("Represa"), which in itself enhanced the benefit of, in this case, wellness education; the support and camaraderie of the other YASC participants; the enthusiasm and openness of the UESC student-translators; the openness of the people of Serra Grande & their apparently genuine benefit from our projects; people from the travel agency were great, too, and personal bartenders & chocolate buffets didn't hurt either.*

*The collaborative spirit, the beauty of Serra Grande, the Floresta Viva connection.*

*Working effectively on the project areas, meeting the people who want to improve their businesses and the young translators from UESC.*

*I was able to use my professional skills as an epidemiologist, in a direct and meaningful way, to address an urgent need for this community thru our Zika/dengue outreach program.*

*Interacting with the local members of the community (esp. the kids) and being inspired by our fellow volunteers. An inspiration!*

### Upcoming Trip to Yamoransa, Ghana (August 4 - 14, 2016)



Under the leadership of Trudie Agbozo '05, YASC is returning to the community of Yamoransa with a group of 80 volunteers to build on the work we've done over the past five years. Our work will be done in partnership with AFS Ghana, University of Cape Coast and GhanaThink – vibrant organizations with local volunteers who will collaborate with us during the program and continue to sustain projects after we leave. During our time in Yamoransa, we will undertake various project ranging from construction to business consulting to athletics to public health to arts and education. We are delighted to have an opportunity to inaugurate the Information Communications & Technology Center (ICTC) with the community during our stay. Although this will be our last large service program to Yamoransa, YASC will remain engaged with community leadership and our ground partners for years to come.

### Other News

Building on YASC's strategic plan to empower the communities we serve in a sustainable manner, we will continue to operate in three to five year rotation cycles to each site. We focus on developing sites in areas where Yale is already engaged and YASC can leverage existing relationships (as was the case with Brazil). We are considering options in a number of countries and would like your feedback on your interest in participating in programs in Armenia, Cuba, Panama, Rwanda, South Africa, and and/or the U.S.

Please fill out this **one-question survey** by visiting the following link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YASCnewprograms> to let us know. We very much value your feedback and we will take your preferences into consideration as we develop new sites for 2017 and beyond.