



YALE ALUMNI SERVICE CORPS

October 2018 Newsletter

Welcome to the first of what we expect will be regular updates from the Yale Alumni Service Corps. Whether you've been on just one of our trips or a dozen (yes, we do have a few people in that category), you're a member of the Corps. And whether you intend to join us on future trips or not, we hope you'll enjoy hearing about what's been going on and what's coming up for YASC.

Summer...or rather, winter...in South Africa

Our big summer trip this year took place in the winter—South Africa's winter, that is. Announced last October, our trip to Cape Town was the fastest-selling trip in YASC history!



YALE ALUMNI SERVICE CORPS ❁ CAPE TOWN 2018

After several prior trips to West Africa, this was YASC's first time in Southern Africa and our first trip to an urban, rather than rural, setting. Led by Rob Biniaz '75, 92 Yale alumni, family, and friends—including AYA Executive Director Weili Cheng '77, participating in her first YASC trip—convened in late July/early August to work on projects in the township of Philippi, an underserved community of approximately 200,000 residents located in the Cape Flats area of Cape Town, southeast of the central business district.

In Philippi, we partnered with [Amandla Development](#), a local NGO founded by Yalie (and veteran of past YASC trips) Scott Clarke '02. In addition to our usual mix of education, construction, and business consulting activities, we engaged in a very robust public health project that was organized by Zach Porterfield of Yale's Medical School, who has made South Africa the focus of his research. In conjunction with local public health officials as well as medical personnel from the University of Cape Town, we screened 1,500 primary school children for ear infections and other hearing-related problems. YASC volunteers also helped to pilot two new educational initiatives in the Philippi schools—an introduction to coding for elementary school students and the development of school newspapers in three high schools.

Plans are already under way for a possible return trip to Cape Town next summer.



Brazil – In Spring 2017, 31 YASC volunteers returned to the community of Serra Grande in Brazil. This trip, like our first trip in 2016, was produced in conjunction with two local partners— Instituto Floresta Viva, an environmental advocacy organization, and Universidade Estadual de Santa Cruz (UESC), a local university focused on agriculture and environmental issues. And like our first trip to Brazil, this one was challenged by a nationwide teachers strike that occurred just before we arrived. But our YASC volunteers, under the leadership of trip producer Andrew Garling '68, organized a wonderful array of tightly integrated projects that focused on the Health of the Serra Grande Youth and Mata

Atlantica Biosphere.

We pause now for a message from YASC board chair Jeff Harlowe '77

Wow, 10 years! It seems hard to believe that YASC is turning 10 this year (and hard for me to believe that Cape Town marked my 10th YASC trip!) Together we have helped thousands of people in communities in, you guessed it, 10 countries including the USA. Congratulations to all who have contributed time, money and sweat to this groundbreaking initiative. I think most will agree that we got back more than we gave: paid in hugs, new experiences, adventure and lifetime friendships. I hope you can join one of our 10th anniversary events later this year to toast our collective achievement.

Fort Mojave Indian Reservation – In October 2017, we took our first extended domestic trip. The site was the Fort Mojave Indian Reservation located in a beautiful desert landscape along the Colorado River at the intersection of three states (California, Arizona, and Nevada).



Led by Max Sklar '06, 50 YASC volunteers focused on a variety of projects involving education, entrepreneurship, and construction. While the entrepreneurship volunteers were meeting one-on-one with local business owners, the construction team was building a sun shelter (necessary in this part of the country) adjacent to the Fort Mojave library and education center. The education team worked with students from all grades on a variety of programs, including a unique research project conducted with high schoolers on local water rights. And one YASC team focused on organizing more than 600 donated books and helped introduce digital resources in the Ava Ich Asit Tribal Library.

A highlight of the week was the Fort Mojave Indian Days parade, a celebration of Native culture that takes place each year in Needles, Calif. This trip was organized in conjunction with NAYA, the Native American Yale Association, and Ashley Hemmers '07, a member of the Fort Mojave Tribe.

One of the volunteers on the trip, Ken Goldstein '84, wrote about this, his first YASC trip, on his personal blog. Take a look at his thoughtful reflections here: <https://tinyurl.com/y89jf583>. If you've written about any of your YASC experiences, let us know and we'll include a link in our next newsletter.

Cuba, si!



Led by Najib El-Sayed '89 M. Phil., '93 Ph.D., YASC organized its first Intercultural Program to Cuba in the summer of 2017 in collaboration with our partners Academic Arrangements Abroad, Amistur Cuba S.A., and the Foundation Antonio Núñez Jiménez for Nature and Humanity, a cultural and scientific non-governmental institution dedicated to research and promotion of projects for the protection of the environment as it relates to culture and society. The activities took place on the outskirts of Matanzas, capital of the Matanzas Province on the northern shore of the island, which is known for its poets, culture, and Afro-Cuban folklore, and our work consisted of visual arts projects, planting trees, constructing dry toilets, and cultural exchange activities.

Our projects and excursions were designed to bring the Yale participants and members of Cuban society together to foster mutual understanding and appreciation of culture.

Alumni Gatherings

YASC veterans in the Bay Area have been gathering for regular mini-reunions over the past several years. Usually organized in Palo Alto by Andrea Werboff, Elena Labrada '86, and Catherine Crystal Foster '87, these pot-luck dinners began in 2014 when Andrea invited everyone in the area who was signed up to go on the first trip to Kakelao, India, to get to know each other before the trip. The group—since expanded to include everyone in the area who's been or is going on any YASC trip—has continued to get together on a regular basis. If you organize a reunion of any kind, take some photos and send them along and we'll include them in the next newsletter!



April dinner at the home of Elena Labrada (l-r) Andrea Werboff, Jeff Harlowe, Catherine Crystal Foster, David Bergman, Charlene Chang, Sebastian Steel, Harry Chang, Elena Labrada

10th Anniversary celebration



Speaking of celebrations, this year marks 10 years since the first YASC trip! Four continents, nine countries, and more than 20 trips later, we are still going strong. We are planning some celebrations to mark the occasion later in the year and hope you will join us. There will probably be at least one on the East Coast and one on the West Coast (and maybe somewhere between!). Watch your email inbox for more information.

[We encourage folks to join the [Yale Alumni Service Corps Facebook group](#)]

2019 Trips



Batey Libertad, Dominican Republic

March 8-17, 2019

We are pleased to announce our upcoming service to Batey Libertad, an under-served community in the Dominican Republic. The service trip, which will be led by Perry Sayles '88, is timed to coincide with Yale's spring break so that Yale undergraduates can participate in the program. Our ground partner is [Yspaniola](#), a non profit established by Yale undergraduates and alumni ten years ago to promote quality education within Batey Libertad. Join us for this unique opportunity to develop and implement projects addressing the needs of the community in the following areas: education, arts, athletics, public health, business career and life skills counseling, and construction.

Visit our website at yalealumniservicecorps.org for details. This trip is filling up fast so register now if you would like to join us.

[Click here to register!](#)

Stay tuned for details on other upcoming programs including a possible return trip to Cape Town in the summer 2019.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to call us directly:

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