

MAY 2010 INTERNS --- KENYA KEYS



Aliska Kilgore

My name is Aliska Kilgore. All my life I have traveled on humanitarian adventures. Starting at the age of ten I went with my family to Mexico City with Medical Teams International to bring Christmas to the children that live in the city dump. Following that trip I worked in Bolivia and Peru. In 2005, my mother and I made our first trip to Kenya. From the moment I stepped onto the red African soil I knew that it was there that I wanted to focus my humanitarian efforts.

I recently finished getting my Masters in Social Work from the University of Utah, with an emphasis in International Studies, in order to help support the people in Kenya more effectively. There is such a sense of community and such a strong work ethic among people we work with there. They are so hungry for opportunity and education.

I will be returning to Kenya for the fifth time this May and I cannot wait. I will be continuing to do research I started with another intern last summer. The research is about the barriers Kenyan girls face and the struggle they go through to obtain an education. I want to continue to learn and understand the everyday struggle they face. We want to help install the supports that will lead to their success. It's a well proven fact that an educated woman has a huge impact on the next generation.

There is so much I love about Keys. I love that it is a small organization. Because it is volunteer run, I know exactly where my donations go. I also appreciate that my voice gets heard when I have ideas how to better the organization. Keys allows for so much hands on experience: from fundraising to presentations to expeditions. I also love that there is so much communication between myself and the child I sponsor. I do not simply hand in a check for his tuition, but I get to watch him grow through pictures and hear his English and education improve through letter he writes.

Kenya Keys truly is such an amazing vehicle for change. I know it has changed my life and I hope that there will be many more lives touched by this organization.

Nate Julian



My name is Nate "Roni" Julian. I currently am a partner at Olive Tree Network, a business development company. I have had a lot of opportunities to travel around North and Central America. The more I travel, the more I want to travel. I love learning about other countries and immersing myself in diverse cultures. In 2004, I traveled to Guatemala to teach in a private school for four months and help develop curriculums. While I was over there I also started an ESL program for adults. I learned a great deal while in Guatemala and realized that my true passions lie within helping others and traveling abroad.

I heard about Kenya KEYS last summer and was instantly intrigued and wanted to know how I could get involved. I was impressed by KEYS' work ethic, values and mission statement. Knowing that they are 100% volunteers and function off 100% donations made me want to sponsor a child. I really appreciate knowing that my entire sponsorship check goes directly to support my child, not to overhead costs. I am really looking forward to having the chance to meet the boy I am sponsoring.

During the weeks I am in Kenya I will be helping develop and enhance their micro financed businesses. I want to better understand their community and see how I can help their businesses develop and flourish. I will also be helping with KEYS scholarship program. I will be gathering pictures and letters of each student KEYS sponsors and taking them back to America to give to the sponsors. I am really looking forward to the personal interaction with the students. I am sure I will be learning much more from them than they will from me.



Alicia Richardson

Hi my name is Alicia Richardson. I live in Salt Lake City, Utah. I graduated from the University of Utah in Therapeutic Recreation and worked in the healthcare field until I began my family. I've served a number of years on different NGO boards raising money for various causes and traveled to South America to work in impoverished villages. I had the fortunate opportunity a few years ago to travel to Africa with friends and family and experience first hand the joy of serving and working with the African people. I was hooked the first day and found myself fully invested -heart, mind and soul in the cause of improving educational opportunities for these amazing individuals. I love people. I love stretching myself to the point of falling into situations that put me out of my comfort zone. If given the choice of an adventure or vacation I'd choose an adventure any day! My hope is to get each one of my four children to this beautiful country and share with them "real beauty" like they've never seen before.

Maile Richardson



Hi, I'm Maile Richardson. I'm eighteen years old and I am currently attending the University of Utah. As of now I am taking general education classes and I'm not sure what I want to major in yet. I am currently a member of the Chi Omega sorority and I love spending time with my sorority sisters, and being involved in all the activities and service projects that are held by the sorority. I have always dreamed of going on a humanitarian trip, and have marveled at my mother's stories of her adventures of humanitarian trips across the globe. I personally want to go to Africa because I think there is a special spirit about the African people and I want to help aid these wonderful people in any way possible.



John Hester

John Hester's mission is to contribute to the growth and development of others. His passion is teaching principle-centered skills, helping others to find their own unique voice.

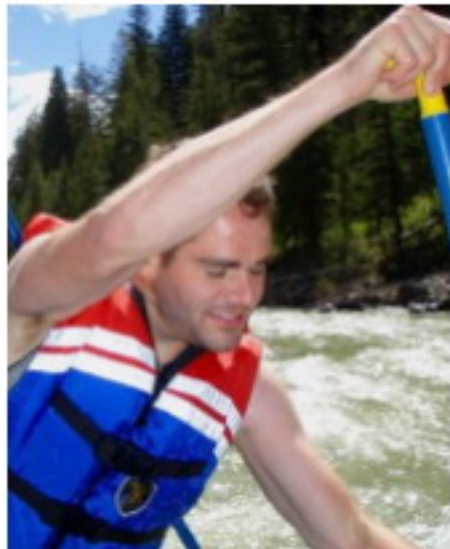
With over 25 years of experience in leadership and organizational development, John has worked with organizations across the United States, Canada, Europe and Asia. He spent six years as the Director of Learning and Development for Nike and currently works as a freelance consultant. John holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Information Management and a Master's in Adult Education.

Ali Tanner



As an accountant, I have buckled myself into a lifetime of learning. Unfortunately, with the belt of a Masters Degree and CPA license, I have also strapped myself in front of a computer screen. I sometimes talk to people I love about how their careers change lives and fulfill dreams and I have yet to feel that. It is difficult for me to imagine any auditor who has achieved that level of satisfaction through routine procedures such as verifying levels of cash or debt. What I felt I lacked in my career motivated me to reevaluate and find a way to achieve that satisfaction (at least in some capacity.) I came to this conclusion: it's not your educational background that dictates the level of happiness you can achieve; it is the way you use your knowledge that makes the difference!

I plan to finally put my financial mentality toward a rewarding journey. Researching microfinance and the economy, implementing small business plans and ideas, educating in business thought as well as in basic profitability and accounting principles - I hope to contribute in each of these areas. But above all, I wish to encourage the already innovative, eager, and intelligent minds of those in Samburu. I can't imagine anything more exciting than being allowed a part in the cultivation of the seeds of thought that have already been planted!



Robb Tanner

Education is as necessary a resource as any, but none will change a life so drastically as an open mind willing to learn. It is this concept that sets Kenya Keys apart, and what draws me to it. There are many programs that allow people to visit a foreign country and provide for those in need. Few programs are designed to teach the people "how to fish" rather than giving them fish.

As a Business Management student at the University of Utah, one of the most important elements in my life is the opportunity to always be learning. I love to teach myself new things or learn about new subjects of interest; I hope to feed the fires in the minds of the people of Samburu by sharing my knowledge and learning with them ways to problem solve.

Steven Wood



Hello Everyone. My name is Steven Wood. I am currently a partner at EssentialCare, a private duty home care company. Growing up in a family of nine children we were raised to be very much service oriented and involved in many things. I absolutely love it and find so much enjoyment and satisfaction in serving others and brightening another person's day. I have also had many opportunities and experiences in my life and feel very blessed to have met such a wide variety of people and learned about many cultures.

I am a creative person and enjoy using my talents to help others and also finding ways to utilize my talents for the betterment of the community. One of my passions/talents is photography. I find that there are so many little factors that go into achieving the right shot, that'll communicate the proper emotion and mood in each of us. I am looking forward to contributing to KenyaKeys through my photography. This is a great opportunity to document and capture all the wonderful things this organization is accomplishing for the people of Kenya.

I feel like this is a great stepping stone for me to continue to learn about various cultures and meet some wonderful people. But mostly I am looking forward to capturing these moments and sharing it with others. Thank you KenyaKeys for this opportunity!



Deborah Shimkus

First and foremost I am committed to being a mother. Additionally I have a passion for the protection of our planet, a love for all animals and the absolute understanding that to live life fully we must truly give of ourselves to others. I have dedicated my career to working in the non-profit world. With a degree Psychology, a masters in Environmental Policy and a penchant for organizational development, I have helped to create multiple organizations in Colorado, Idaho and Oregon. I have served as Executive Director of several organizations, including the Global Action Network. Currently I am working as the Outreach Director for two non-profits in Portland, and am actively engaged in the development of a new organization my son and I have created, Beyond Our Bubble, which provides opportunities for people to go beyond their bubble to understand and help others.

As a new board member for Kenya Keys, I will be working in Kenya to gain greater insight to all the components of the organization in the Samburu area, enabling me to further develop effective strategies for sustainable support for the educational efforts there. I will also be working with the special needs children and administrators at the Ndohivyo schools. Upon returning I look forward to developing opportunities for communities here to gain an understanding and compassion for those on the other side of our planet, building meaningful and lasting connections between our diverse cultures.



Jacob Shimkus

I am a junior at Lakeridge High School in Lake Oswego, Oregon. For as long as I can remember, I have been dedicated to service work, originally focusing on my passion for the environment. Three years ago I started a group called the Green Teens that worked on a variety of environmental efforts focused primarily on climate change awareness and activism. The group has done exceedingly well over the years and has been recognized nationally for its efforts.

In the fall of 2009, I decided to broaden my work to include humanitarian efforts. The result was the founding of Beyond Our Bubble, an organization dedicated to creating opportunities for people to give of themselves to their community and their planet. As a part of this organization, my mother Deborah, and I introduced the Into Africa project to connect the people of Lake Oswego to the people of rural Africa. After talking with Brent and Rinda Hayes, it became quite apparent that the goals of Into Africa and Kenya Keys are perfectly complementary, and the foundations were laid for something truly amazing. Preparing for the upcoming trip, I am excited to explore the lives of youth living in the Taru and Samburu area. I will be working with the high school students to further develop their library, teach classes, and take a unique look at a day in the life of African students. I plan on returning to Lake Oswego equipped to bridge two entirely different communities and energized to create new opportunities to engage others in the cause.



Bryson White

I am originally from Draper, Utah, and am currently attending Utah State University in Logan, Utah. In May 2010 I will finally graduate with a bachelor's degree in entrepreneurship and minor in economics. I have had some great experiences at school. I am currently working as a consultant with the New Venture Consulting Group, a group of undergraduate students charged with performing due diligence work and providing feedback on business plans. I assist Angel and Venture Capital firms as they screen incoming deals and also consult entrepreneur clients as they prepare their business plans. I have also started several businesses, most recently a company that outsources manufacturing of whitewater river rafts to China and sells them in the United States (I mostly just use this as an excuse to go rafting a lot).

I am also a member of the Huntsman Scholars program at USU. With the Huntsman Scholars program, I spent a semester studying the integration of politics, business, and NGO's on a global level. I got to spend four weeks travelling through Western Europe visiting prominent business, political, and charitable organization's headquarters. This really sparked my desire to learn more about Africa and make a trip with Kenya Keys. (I should also mention that the Huntsman Scholars program is helping fund this trip to Kenya. Thank you!)

After we get back, my wife (Kristy) and I will be moving away from Utah so she can go to grad school. I'm not sure what I'm going to do next ☺. I would love to work for a humanitarian organization and continue to learn about international development. I plan to get a masters degree, either in business or international development, sometime within the next five years.

I also love spending time with Kristy, kayaking, rock climbing, and skiing (basically anything that might make my mother worry). I am excited to work with Keys and the people of Samburu. But most of all I'm just excited to learn what the people of Kenya have to teach us.



Kristy White

I grew up working on my family's fruit and dairy farm in Willard, Utah. I am currently a senior at Utah State University (Logan, Utah) pursuing a Bachelors degree in Social Work. I will start graduate school in September (assuming I can decide on which University to attend by then) working towards a Masters in social work. I am involved with Utah State University's counseling center, working to educate individuals as well as the community in ways they can create positive change in their lives. I also work at Bear River Mental Health (BRMH) as a student intern. At BRMH I teach groups and individuals in developing needed skills for them to function at a higher level in society. For as long as I can remember I have enjoyed traveling, learning, being outside, and playing sports (especially soccer). This will be my first trek to Kenya and I am very excited!

The emphasis of my project in Kenya will be to delve into the HIV/AIDS crisis that has such an impact on the countries of East Africa. I want to help Kenya Keys gain a better understanding of how AIDS is affecting the students in the Samburu division. Assessing the number of AIDS orphans, the number of students dealing with AIDS in their homes, and the number of teachers impacted by the disease will help Keys know how to meet the ongoing challenge of offering support programs to this most vulnerable sector of the community.