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RAVENSCROFT'S GLOBAL PROGRAMS PRIME STUDENTS
FOR MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT ACROSS BORDERS

- BY STACY CALFO -

LEAD FROM HERE, RAVENSCROFT'S SIGNATURE FRAMEWORK, CHALLENGES US TO COMMIT TO A BOLD NOTION: THAT THROUGH THE CULTIVATION AND PRACTICE OF PERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES, OUR STUDENTS CAN CHANGE THEIR WORLD. IT HELPS, OF COURSE, FOR THEM TO SEE AND UNDERSTAND MORE OF WHAT THAT WORLD HOLDS.

DAVID KATES, Ravenscroft's director of global education and initiatives, put it this way: "Global citizenship focuses on supporting students and alumni to thrive in an interconnected world. What happens in the classrooms and beyond is aimed to instill the idea of being ambassadors of families, school and country and to be thoughtful citizens in every sense of the word."

Our students and alumni have embraced that role, exploring global topics, immersing themselves in new cultures and partnering with like-minded organizations in service to the worldwide community.

THINK GLOBALLY AND LEARN GLOBALLY

Service trips are one way our Middle and Upper School students begin to see themselves as citizens of the world.

Students traveling to Belize explore public health-care challenges and gain hands-on experience with basic medical interventions. In Costa Rica, other groups gain an authentic understanding of different worldviews and social needs. Students visiting Zambia learn about critical rural challenges such as access to quality education and employment, environmental stewardship and lack of infrastructure. New this year is a trip to the Blackfoot Indian Reservation in Montana to learn about elder care service.

"When we partner with different communities across the globe, we aren't going there to 'save' anyone," Kates said. "It's more about learning from each other and creating sustainable partnerships. We go, we listen, we learn."

Karyn Miller '10 credits Ravenscroft with teaching her the importance of service and maintaining a global perspective. After hearing a presentation about the Global Citizen Year program, Miller decided to get involved. Working in Bahia, Brazil, she assisted a community health care worker with medical

duties. Miller then attended Georgetown University, earning a degree in nursing and health studies. She went on to spend two years in the Peace Corps as a community health volunteer in Rwanda.

"I was always impressed by the school's intentional incorporation of global curricula and the way in which they encourage students to explore the world, whether inside or outside of the classroom," Miller said. "I think it's important for students to think globally and learn globally, so that we can all focus on what unites us rather than what divides us."

A TOPIC YOU'RE PASSIONATE ABOUT

Ravenscroft students can also earn an International Diploma. Liz Kloster '13 noted that the experience shaped her mindset, as well as her skill set, in important ways.

"I took courses geared toward international studies and fulfilled requirements such as studying abroad, hosting [international] students, taking a higher-level foreign language and doing a senior internship that was internationally focused," Kloster said. "I was not able to

ZAMBIA BELIZE



ANNA PUGH '17 poses with students of the Uyoba School in Mfuwe, Zambia, during a 2016 school service trip; (opposite page) farmers in Senegal work in partnership with MELISSA FUNSTEN '12 and other Peace Corps volunteers to implement sustainable agroforestry practices



(clockwise from top left) KARYN MILLER '10 and a local official survey a kitchen garden in Rwanda; Middle School students and chaperones show off the chicken coop they built at Escuela San José Norte, a school in Costa Rica, in 2017; American Creativity Academy teacher LIZ KLOSTER '13 visits the Grand Mosque of Kuwait; MELISSA FUNSTEN '12 (front row at left) and other Peace Corps volunteers visit with Senegalese farmers after a class on tree nurseries. Enjoy more photos and stories at www.ravenscroft.org/springmagazine2018

“IT’S IMPORTANT FOR STUDENTS TO BE EXPOSED TO SERVICE AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES BECAUSE THE WORLD IS FLATTENING. WE WANT OUR STUDENTS TO BE ADEPT AT 21ST-CENTURY SKILLS AND ALSO HAVE A COMPASSION FOR DIFFERENCES, NOT TOLERATING DIFFERENCES BUT EMBRACING THEM.”

— DAVID KATES, RAVENSCROFT’S
DIRECTOR OF GLOBAL
EDUCATION AND INITIATIVES

travel while at school, so I was really grateful to be able to host students from other countries at my home and build friendships that still last today.”

Kloster’s international focus continued into her college years. While studying education at UNC-Wilmington, she did her student teaching in Kuwait and taught English at a school in Thailand for children at risk for human trafficking. She is now teaching first-grade girls at the American Creativity Academy in Kuwait.

Will Hayman '11, who worked in marketing at Ruamrudee International School in Bangkok, identified Ravenscroft history teacher Mary Beth Immediata’s work with the WorldQuest team as a formative global experience for him. He also cited Ravenscroft projects such as “Adopt A Stream” as an important introduction to community service. Building on that foundation, Hayman volunteered while in Thailand, teaching English to prison inmates.

His advice to students looking to make a difference? “I would suggest immersing yourself in a topic you’re passionate about by studying its impact around the world,” he said.

LEARNING AND GROWING

Melissa Funsten '12 also believes that early exposure to service is important. “It was instilled in me from [Middle School on] that community involvement is important and worth engaging in,” she said.

Funsten has gone all-in since she graduated from Davidson College, joining the Peace Corps and serving in Senegal, where she works with farmers in agroforestry. She has organized camps for girls, malaria prevention trainings and scholarships for female students.

“For my first 22 years, I was given incredible opportunities — I was able to study at top academic institutions, participate in various sports leagues and travel around the world,” Funsten said. “My education

has taught me to think on my feet and to learn as I go. In being here, I am also learning and growing, and by sharing my experience, I hope others may be able to open their minds about the world as well.”

That goal has led her to partner with Ravenscroft social studies teacher Greg Anysz on a pen-pal program between his middle schoolers and students in Senegal. “We’re hoping to foster a better understanding between the two cultures, taking comfort in the similarities and learning from the differences,” she said.

The seeds of these commitments to serving the global community were nurtured at Ravenscroft — and that’s by design, Kates said.

“It’s important for students to be exposed to service and developing countries because the world is flattening. We want our students to be adept at 21st-century skills and also have a compassion for differences, not tolerating differences but embracing them.”

WADE HALVA '94: COMMITTED TO SERVICE AT HOME AND ABROAD

WHILE RAVENSCROFT DIDN'T YET OFFER THE GLOBAL EDUCATION AND INITIATIVES PROGRAM when Wade Halva '94 was a student, he said that teachers’ encouragement to be open to new possibilities was a key influence in his life.

Today, as a Presbyterian minister in Marion, Illinois, Halva believes global experiences help people cultivate different notions about what’s possible. He is passionately committed to the Marion Medical Mission, which provides clean drinking water to people living in the rural African countries of Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia.

“These are people who only make 41 cents a day. Most are subsistence farmers, and if they get sick and lose a day in the fields, it’s a crisis for a family,” he said. “There is a 60 percent infant mortality rate, and another 60 percent die by age 5, mostly because of water-borne illnesses.”

Since 1990, mission volunteers have installed 30,000 wells in villages across Africa. Halva has been on two service trips, in 2012 and 2016. His next trip is slated for September.

“During one visit, the village head said, ‘You came to me two years ago and told me that you would build a well, and I didn’t believe you. The government told me they would build us a well 20 years ago. It didn’t happen. But you made it happen, and now my people won’t get sick,’” Halva recalled. “It’s fascinating to see firsthand what else is out there. It gives me a strong sense of appreciation for what I have.” *R*



WADE HALVA '94 (bottom photo, center) and other volunteers work with villagers in rural African nations to build wells that will provide clean drinking water for their communities