AGS Alumna: Working for the Red Cross

Charlotte Bennborn (Class of 2007) works with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). She is currently in Baghdad covering central Iraq. This is her fourth mission with the ICRC. Previously she was in Darfur, Eastern Congo and Libya. She took time from her very hectic daily schedule to answer student Katherine Parsons’ questions.

How did you become involved with the ICRC?

Strangely enough it all started with a visit to Geneva with AGS… The reason I decided to do a degree in IR in the first place was because I wanted to get involved with the humanitarian world or development. However, to be honest, when I started my studies I didn’t really know what the difference was between the two, nor how in the world I would get into either of those two fields. So, during my first year at AGS we had a trip to Geneva to visit various international organizations. One of them was the International Committee of the Red Cross. A very feisty woman did a presentation for us about her work with the ICRC and it was literally like a light bulb went off above my head. This was it! This was exactly the job I wanted! It was challenging on all levels; intellectually, emotionally, physically.

What was it about the organization that drew you in?

After my initial introduction to the ICRC in Geneva, I read up on the organization and found that it represented values that I respect enormously in a world that is so driven by political and economic interests: the core values of independence and neutrality in everything the organization does.

Also, although it may sound a little twisted, I have enormous respect for the idea that war is inevitable and that the ICRC focuses on relieving the suffering of those who are caught in the middle of the horror.
Also, what is your typical day when on the job?

My job varies a little depending on which country I’m working in and the nature of the conflict. I work in the Economic Security department which in essence deals with trying to help conflict-affected populations regain or maintain a certain level of economic self-sufficiency in spite of conflict. As you can imagine, this means rather different interventions in Darfur to Iraq for instance. In short, my job is all about working with a team of local staff to understand the household economy of the population in conflict-affected areas, determining how we can best help them, design suitable interventions, and then implementing those interventions. In Darfur this might be through distributions of seeds and tools, while in Iraq it might be through small grants to help people start a small income-generating project.

What do you love/can’t stand about it?

I love having the incredible opportunity to visit places and meet people that I would never otherwise have access to. I love working closely with people from the countries where I’m based and learning from them. Also, I’m extremely proud to be part of an organization of truly dedicated people who will do everything to help those in need even in the most challenging circumstances. My biggest fear about joining this type of organization was that your private life goes out the window. Your colleagues at work are also your housemates and your friends. But, in the end it’s usually great because you’re surrounded by people living the same reality as you. It’s challenging to try to share stories of the field with people at home … So your colleagues are kind of your family on mission.

Have you got any particularly amazing stories to tell?

The irony is that after a while, all the things that probably seem incredible to people not in the ICRC, very quickly become incredibly normal. For every story you think is incredible, a colleague has one that trumps yours tenfold … So, being in a convoy of 22 huge trucks full of food driving through the Darfuri desert, riding donkeys to get to beneficiaries, encountering tribes in Congo with heads shaped like cones, discussing with Tuaregs around an open fire, or sitting in tents with nomads is not worth mentioning really…

What has surprised you about working for the Red Cross?

What has really struck me not only about the ICRC but the humanitarian world in general is how incredibly professional it is. I really thought I was entering a world of volunteers with rastas and flip flops – but instead encountered organograms, suits, and enormous logistical networks. Not to speak of the number of people working in this “business”! I thought I’d be entering an exclusive world … but I am certainly not alone.

What’s your ultimate goal with the organization?

You can now have a career in the humanitarian world. There is growing pressure from donors that organizations be held accountable for how they spend their money. Of course, in these difficult economic times, this has become increasingly important since it is a non-profit business after all. As a consequence, I think all organizations want to be more and more professional. This means they want to attract qualified people or at least maintain incentives for people to stay and mature within the organization (rather than have a one-two year “experience” and then go back to the private sector).

For me personally, there is no goal. In the end, what I love about my job is the proximity to the field and the population. Sometimes, the higher you move up in an organization – the further removed you are from this reality. For me, the goal is simply to hope for worthwhile missions where I feel I can truly make a difference for the populations we’re trying to help.

Can you think of any applicable AGS experience that you’ve benefitted from with respect to your job?

IR is the perfect introduction into this world. Everything we do, the very existence of the organisation, is founded in geopolitics and state interests (and of course that of non-state actors too). Also, although it was frankly not my favorite subject – Dr. Yates taught me a thing or two about research methodology which I think has been extremely useful in my job where I have to collect a lot of information and analyse it.
Alexander, Ashley Stepanek Lochart and Lynn Manning (aka “The Sole survivors”) accepted the challenge and trained diligently for the event held on May 12 and 13. The team excelled at fundraising, collecting over €1800 in record time, thanks in part to the donations of several AGS students who gave generously in spite of their limited budgets. Thank you again.

Unfortunately, in spite of their best efforts and the help and encouragement of their amazing support team (AGSers Stephen Goss, Carlyle Taylor and their dogs Buoy, Vincent and Emma), the Sole Survivors had to withdraw after 39 kms; Ashley succumbed to the recurrence of a painful foot injury, and Lynn learned that “mind over matter” is no match for food poisoning. The day ended with one team member, one supporter, and one dog in the emergency room. In spite of their difficulties, the team and their supporters survived smiling with memories of the beautiful Burgundy countryside, friendship and laughter, and the knowledge that they helped Oxfam to make the world just a little better.

Lynn is putting a team together for 2013. Anyone interested in training with the Trailwalker in mind or being on the Support team can contact her at irislyn721@gmail.com

AGS Advisory Board member, Sir Christopher MacRae, former British Ambassador and High Commissioner to Pakistan and to Nigeria and who served in many other countries, is an experienced and enthusiastic walker. He gave Lynn advice on how to train for the Trailwalker event and then offered her these words of encouragement.

Hi, Lynn,

Just to let you know that I’ve survived both my six weeks of radiotherapy, and the Paris Marathon last Sunday. My time was 4 hrs, 3 mins. That’s over an hour longer than when I first ran the Paris Marathon (in 1983). But as I managed to shave a minute off my time here two years ago, and anyway I’m 75 in a fortnight, I’m perfectly content with that.

Good luck for your challenge on 12/13 May. Hope the weather is better than in Paris this week. I’ll be thinking of you!....

Best wishes,

Christopher MacRae.

Student Paper Published

Erika Rodriguez (Class of 2013) has had a paper published on the website of the Latin America Bureau (LAB) which, with the support of Oxfam, works to broaden public understanding of issues of human rights, development, culture and social and economic justice in Latin America and the Caribbean. Ms. Rodriguez was encouraged to submit the article by the editor of LAB.

In her article, “Venezuela’s love affair with China,” Ms. Rodriguez looks at increased relations between China and Venezuela, particularly with respect to oil. “I attempt to provide enough facts to show the reader that the Venezuelan diversification of oil markets to China and the threat to discontinue oil relations with the US is based more in ideology than on pragmatism or practicality, and it is not only unviable, but also not beneficial for the country’s economy,” states Ms. Rodriguez.

The article is an abridged version of the paper presented by Ms. Rodriguez at the AGS Annual Graduate Student Conference in May. Ms. Rodriguez will look deeper into the subject of the Venezuelan political system, which is the topic of her thesis.

AGS at Model United Nations

After months of training sessions led by students Andrea Badiola and Ryan Godfrey a group of seven AGS students took time out of their spring break to travel to Barcelona to participate in the Catalonian Model United Nations (C’MUN) from May 2-5, 2012. C’MUN was hosted by the UN Association of Spain (ANUE).

The AGS team took home more awards than any other team, leading in debates and embracing the opportunity to learn from the simulation. Etienne Rosas, representing Portugal in the United Nations Security Council was awarded “Outstanding Delegate” for his performance. Mr. Rosas had helped pave the way for the AGS MUN team back in February of 2012 with his participation in the Utrecht, Netherlands MUN conference.

First-time participants, Carolyn Meyer and Amy Pope were awarded “Outstanding Rookie Delegate” representing – respectively – Kenya in the Environmental Committee and Spain in the General Assembly on UN Reform.

Both AGS MUN student advisors Andrea Badiola and Ryan Godfrey were awarded honorable mentions for their impromptu performances. Ms. Badiola took on the challenging role of representing Guatemala in the Human Rights Council, which was dealing with a Guatemalan crisis simulation. Mr. Godfrey assumed the role of the Chinese delegation in the Security Council demonstrating a deep understanding of power politics within the UNSC.
In the Environmental Committee delegates Lisa Albright, representing the Democratic Republic of Congo and Hjanni Awotar, representing Australia also received praise for their participation.

C’MUN 2012 proved to be an invaluable opportunity for students to explore issues in international relations with greater depth, while also learning what it means to be a diplomat. Ms. Pope commented, “I realized once I was in the simulation not only how important it was to know how to represent my delegation (Spain) and be able to anticipate what moves the big players would make, but also to understand all of the cultural and political nuances occurring between States and to know the historical context influencing their decisions.”

The AGS MUN team had a fantastic time participating in the conference and enjoyed the beautiful and upbeat city of Barcelona. The team supervised by Dr. Ruchi Anand looks forward to welcoming new members for the fall semester. In the study of international relations and diplomacy the relevance of MUN cannot be overstated. Amy Pope (Class of 2013)

Etienne Rosas (Class of 2012) says: “MUN is really great preparation as far as presenting and debating goes, especially for Master’s students with upcoming defenses. Just like in a thesis defense, you have to drive your point home quickly and effectively and think critically about an issue being debated from different perspectives. Plus at any MUN, you see new places, meet new people and eat good food. I don’t think any thesis prep work gets much easier or enjoyable than that.”

Negotiating in Tangier

The six AGS students enrolled this year in the dual degree program AGS/Université Paris Sud went to Tangier (Morocco) for three days in April to participate in an international negotiation simulation and seminar.

These students graduated in June with two Masters Degrees: an M.A. in International Relations and Diplomacy from AGS and a Master en Diplomatie et Négociations Stratégiqes from Université Paris Sud.

Student Viewpoint

Undeclared War in American Southwest

By Dave Feldman (Class of 2012)

Student Dave Feldman spent last summer far away from Paris, doing advocacy and aid work with migrants on the US/Mexico border. He writes of this experience and his thoughts on this issue.

Although immigration reform in the United States has become a hot topic in recent years, the human impact of the current broken system has been largely absent from the debate. Draconian immigration laws such as Arizona’s SB1070 and Alabama’s HB56—coupled with the Obama Administration’s aggressive deportation policy and controversial Secure Communities program—ensure that the effects of the failed system are felt throughout the entire nation. Nonetheless, the Southwest borderlands remain the front line in what can justifiably be described as a war.

Crossing into the US from Mexico used to be a relatively easy endeavor, but things began to change with the entry into force of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, which destroyed the livelihoods of— and thus displaced—millions of Mexicans. Correctly anticipating a massive migration northward, the Clinton Administration simultaneously launched the Southwest Border Strategy to stem the influx of undocumented migrants, building fences and beefing up patrolling in urban areas serving as points of entry, such as San Diego/Tijuana and El Paso/Ciudad Juárez. This militarization trend has continued up to the present day, with predator drones flying in the sky and members of the National Guard joining a record 20,000 Border Patrol agents—many of whom are Iraq War veterans themselves—at the border.

The supposed logic behind this policy is to deter people from crossing in urban areas by making it unbearably difficult, but as a result migrants are being funneled into the Sonoran desert, where they must be wary of heavily-armed Border Patrol
agents, vigilante groups such as the Minutemen, and Mexican drug trafficking organizations such as Los Zetas, as well as unscrupulous “coyote” smugglers, who charge upwards of $5000 for the trip. They must also contend with the extreme dangers of the desert terrain, including rattlesnakes, black widows, mountain lions, a lack of potable water and—during the summer—temperatures in excess of 100 degrees and flash floods. As a result, hundreds of Mexicans and Central Americans perish in the desert each year.

In order to minimize suffering in these harsh environs, the group No More Deaths maintains a permanent camp on the outskirts of Arivaca, Arizona, which volunteers use as a base for daily patrols in the desert. I participated in more than half a dozen of these patrols over four days. Always making sure to have at least one Spanish speaker and one medic in the group, we traveled in groups of four to eight, taking our vehicles as far as we could go on the rough terrain before setting out on foot. Using detailed maps and handheld GPS devices, we hiked along migrant trails to designated “drops”, where we would leave several gallons of water, food and blankets. I was never on patrol for more than six hours at a time, and was fortunate enough to have boots and clothing in good repair, an American passport, and adequate food and water. Migrants, on the other hand, can spend more than a week in the desert with none of these things. Although they often travel at night to minimize detection, the empty jugs that we found along the trail let us know that our work was making an impact—unless we noticed that they had been callously slashed, a sure sign that Border Patrol had discovered them first.

I also spent three weeks in the border town of Nogales, where every day I would walk over to Mexico with other volunteers and provide aid to those who had either been recently deported from the US or were traveling north and making a final stop before attempting to cross. Partnering with local Mexican aid centers, we provided free phone calls and clothing, helped recover personal belongings that had been confiscated, performed basic medical care and simply listened to the stories migrants had to tell. A common theme was abuse suffered at the hands of Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, such as the denial of food and water; the crowding of hundreds of detainees into a single cell; and various types of physical, verbal, sexual and psychological abuse, much of which amounts to torture. In terms of numbers, Obama has actually taken a harsher stance on deportation than Bush, and although the administration claims to prioritize dangerous criminals and avoid breaking up families, I spoke to many people who had their removal proceedings initiated due to a simple traffic violation, despite having lived in the US for decades and having children in the country. As a result, many parents said they would brave the enormous risks and once again attempt the journey north in order to reunite with their children. Indeed, although the recent downturn in the economy has precipitated a steep drop in border crossings over the past few years, one of the patterns currently being observed is that the same people are now being deported over and over again, precisely because they have such strong ties to the US.

No More Deaths is a non-hierarchical organization, operates around consensus decision-making principles and offers a true volunteer immersion experience. In Tucson, volunteers learn about the history of the border and are given a general overview of the corporate actors profiting from the current “round ‘em up and lock ‘em up” policy, from private prison firms such as the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) and the Wackenhut buses used to transport detainees, to the role of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) in drafting model anti-immigrant state legislation. Volunteers can also attend a session of Operation Streamline, a daily proceeding in which seventy shackled detainees are brought before a federal judge and charged en masse with illegal entry or reentry in what amounts to a mockery of a supposedly fair judicial system. No More Deaths also engages in advocacy work, such as calling ICE officials to halt the deportations of non-violent immigrants who have grown up in the US, and documenting incidents of abuse in reports, such as last year’s A Culture of Cruelty. Representatives from the organization have even met with White House advisors, members of Congress and Customs and Border Protection; we are calling for an investigation by the Department of Justice into the widespread abuse being perpetuated by the Border Patrol and an independent mechanism to oversee the Department of Homeland Security.

I am currently writing my thesis on the militarization of the border, as seen through the lens of hegemonic theory. While I believe that a truly just solution necessitates a reimagining of the current nation-state and global capitalist economic systems, more practical steps could be taken to minimize the suffering on the US/Mexico border. These include repealing NAFTA and CAFTA; ending Obama’s aggressive deportation policy; a path to citizenship for undocumented people residing in the US; and the abolition of private prisons, which aside from encouraging incarceration are poorly regulated and thus hotspots of abuse. Furthermore, we must personally reject the mass media’s “otherization” and dehumanization of immigrants, and refuse to be complicit in this undeclared war.
Undergraduates at AGS

Fall, Spring and Summer semesters have again brought groups of undergraduate students to study at AGS through Arcadia University’s study abroad center. These students come from all over the U.S., from universities such as: George Washington University, Columbia University, Sarah Lawrence College, Stonehill College, and Rochester Institute of Technology.

Students in the fall semester went on an overnight trip to Brussels, where they visited the European Parliament accompanied by a Member of the European Parliament. The spring group went on a two-day trip to Strasbourg for a visit to the Council of Europe. They explored the city and took advantage of the regional Alsatian cuisine. They tried the Sauerkraut, Flammekueche, and Riesling Wine. This summer’s group took a day trip to Giverny for a visit of Monet’s Gardens.

Students studying abroad with the ‘Arcadia in Paris’ program earn 16 credits over a 15-week semester (6 in summer). They study international relations with a focus on Europe or France at AGS, and take extensive French language courses with the Alliance Française.

They can stay in a shared residence hall; accommodation they find on their own; or in a home-stay. With this latter choice, they live with a local French family and so get ‘real’ experience of life in a French home. They adapt to French customs, learn about French culture, and of course, as they use their French every day with the family, students who have opted for a home-stay always feel that they are now comfortable speaking French.

Faculty News

Dr. Tatiana Coutto joined the faculty of AGS this semester to teach European studies. She is from Brazil and earned her Ph.D. in Political Science from the European University Institute, Florence, Italy.

She attended an executive training seminar on “Climate Governance: Issues and Institutions,” at the European University Institute (EUI), Florence from May 30 to June 1. The seminar brought together academics, officials from international organizations, executives and policy makers from many countries to discuss issues such as environmental protection, financial regulation, political participation, regionalism and security. The event was organized by the Global Governance Program, based at EUI’s Robert Schumann Center for Advanced Studies.

From July 8 to 12 she will attend the 22nd Congress of the International Political Science Association organized by Dr. Carlos Closa, from the Institute of Public Goods and Policies, Spanish National Research Council in Madrid. Her paper “Adherence to Arms Control and Disarmament Treaties: Insights from South America” will be discussed in a panel entitled “Comparative Regional Integration and the New World Order(s): Latin America Experiences.”

Dr. Douglas Yates met the US Assistant Undersecretary for African Affairs William Fitzgerald during an official visit to France on Jan. 19th. Yates travelled to London on March 2nd to present his book on "The French Oil Industry and the Corps des Mines in Africa" (Trenton/Asmara: Africa World Press, 2011) at the British think tank Chatham House. On April 20th Yates was at the University of Passau (Germany) to present his most recent book, “The Scramble for African Oil” (London: Pluto Press, 2009). From May 22nd-27th Yates was at the Voronezh State University (Russia) to participate in a conference on international private higher education, sponsored by Arcadia University, and July 25-31st he is travelling to Jeju National University (South Korea) to teach in the Peace Island Summer School.


Professor Joav Toker made several radio and TV appearances on French channel LCI, the international Francophone channel TV5 and the CCTV (Chinese National Television) during April and May, commenting on the French presidential campaign and the election of François Hollande.

He attended a conference on April 17th at the “Cercle Bernard Lazare” in Paris on Foreign Policy issues in the context of the French Presidential elections. He took part in two discussions on Social Networks and their impacts on the overall balance of power between media.
actors and political institutions in London on May 22nd and in Milan on May 25th.

His article “Proche dans la Distance” was published by the special edition (“Hors-Série”) of Le Monde, April-May 2012, entitled “Les Années Sarkozy.”

Dr. Clinton Robinson writes: “The international community met recently to consider the future of its support to Afghanistan, seeking ways to support stability, peace and development in this war-torn country. Meanwhile, many communities across the country pursue opportunities to improve their lives, tired of conflict and disruption.

In April and May this year I spent two months in Kabul assisting the government to move forward in providing quality education. My focus was on adult learning opportunities—a critical area where literacy rates are among the lowest in the world, under 40% for men and perhaps as low as 15% for women. However, there is enthusiasm for learning, recognizing that education is a key to the future, both for current generations and for the 49% of the population which is under 15.

Life can seem quite normal as I move around Kabul—there are those who seek to disrupt that and to prevent people making the most of their lives. In a complex political and security situation, finding the way forward for education is certainly a challenge—but also an inspiration for real change.”

Alumni Viewpoint

By Adriana Barillas-Batarse (Class of 2010)

I attended the Annual Convention of the International Studies Association in San Diego in April. The topic was, “Power, Politics and Participation in the Global Information age.”

I jokingly called this the “Woodstock” of IR conferences, because there were so many well known academics in our field there: I met Carol Webber, our own Dr. Ruchi Anand’s doctoral adviser. Jon Mearsheimer and Joseph Nye were discussants on different panels; I spoke to Babak Rahimi and Elham Gheyetanchi (known for their research on the effects of media and revolution in the Middle East), and Jennifer Whitten-Woodrig and Eytan Gilboa (original proponents of media theories like the CNN Effect).

The paper I presented was titled “Blogging and Authoritarian Regimes: Iran and the Advent of New Technology”, which was a concise version of my thesis. I received excellent feedback and a plethora of new ideas for further research as I consider my next step in academia.

This conference was not the first I have attended but it was the one that really brought home to me why Dr. Anand insists on the first day of IR Theories class that attending a conference is important—and fun too. Students, I urge you to heed her advice:

♦ If you are still toying with topics of interest, going to a conference will allow you to further research these interests, see what other people are doing, what research topics are “in”, and how these topics can become research papers, and eventually turn into a thesis.

♦ You present your ideas and research to a group of total strangers, who have no vested interest in your success. Their criticism might be harsh, but can open your eyes to a whole new world of possibilities and help focus and direct your research. You get ideas for different methodologies, new theories, and how to operationalize everything in your research.

♦ Also, as Dr. Yates once told me, presenting your ideas in public will prepare you for that thesis defense we all fear.

♦ And last, but not least, you meet published academics in your field, and can run your ideas past them, as well as hearing their ideas.

There are conferences of all types, in many countries, including right there in Paris. Attending just one during your two years at AGS would allow you to network in the field of IR, as well as help you challenge yourself and succeed in that small, little, insignificant detail you must complete to graduate... your thesis.

Alumni Notes

Timothy McGowan (Class of 2010) has joined the U.S. Navy. “I started basic training for the Navy in June. Basic training is a grueling 9 weeks at the Navy Recruit Training Command in Illinois and my job specific training will take place in Pensacola, Florida, lasting about 5 months.

Initially, I began the process of joining the Navy with an officer recruiter but the selection boards for Navy officers are closed for another few years. So, I made the difficult decision to join on the enlisted side. My education and degrees will not go to waste and the Navy is starting me at a higher pay grade than I normally would have, putting me in a position to get into non-commissioned officer ranks much faster, and the job I have is exactly what I dreamed of having on the civilian side. I will be doing data collection and analysis with advanced electronics and monitoring digital communications.

My commitment to the Navy is four years in active duty service, with a four-year reserve requirement; however, I’ve told myself that if I’m moving up the ranks and like what I’m doing, I may just remain in. I’ll cross that bridge when I come to it. For now, though, it looks like I finally have begun to move my life forward.”

Harold Bashor (Class of 2002) has news. “In May I began teaching international business in Franklin University’s MBA program at the Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS) in Oman. My classes are held on the MCBS campus in Muscat, the country’s capital, largest city, and seat of government. The Franklin MBA is the first graduate pro-
Ashley Stepanek (Class of 2011) recently helped her husband to open a shared space for photography in Paris in the 11ème. Located at 12 rue des Immeubles Industriels at Nation, Arthur Lockhart Atelier Photographique is both a gallery and a studio—a warm, creative place where photography lessons are also offered for those looking to improve their shooting ability. Arthur explains, “I would like this place to be open-minded and casual, where people can speak and learn about photography and share stories about their interests and adventures shooting a variety of things.”

Arthur and Ashley conceptualized the idea of opening a photography atelier while she was attending AGS and he was operating his freelance consultancy in their little apartment in the 9ème. But, after marrying last summer at his parents’ home in Castelnau-le-Lez, and upon her gaining her Master’s, the stars aligned and a space for the business opened up miraculously. The couple pooled their savings and threw their efforts into getting the location refurbished and ready to open. The official inauguration was April 4th and many AGSers attended.

For more information about the atelier, call + 33 (0)618 54 06 54 (FR) and visit www.arthurlockhart.com. We welcome stop-bys!

Amanda Nagele-Roix (Class of 2006) writes: “Here is some news from the Nagele-Roix family! We are now living in Montauroux, a small village in the south of France. Our son, Gabriel, is nearly 18 months old now and is, as always, keeping us on our toes!

I’m working for SKEMA Business School, a grande école de commerce located in Sophia Antipolis, as an international coordinator. I’m in charge of managing the transfer of about 500 graduate students per year to the school’s international campuses in Suzhou, China and Raleigh, North Carolina. I really enjoy my new job as I get to work directly with the students which I really love.”

Zara Bott-Goins (Class of 2011) has good news: It has been almost a year since I left AGS. I have gone from unemployed in Paris to working for a few months on a grant funded project in Los Angeles and back around again to unemployed. The anxiety and panic of being jobless was weighing on me when just last week I received an email offering me the Country Director position with The Girls Foundation of Tanzania. It’s the job I’ve been working towards for a long time so I accepted immediately!

TGFT is a US-based nonprofit that works to provide intellectual and financial support for the educational development of secondary school girls in Arusha, Tanzania. Like many places in the world, girls’ education does not often take priority over duties within the family or financial concerns. Only five percent of girls in Tanzania finish high school. The hope is that by working with one girl at a time we can be a part of increasing that number. TGFT offers school sponsorships to motivated students to help them make it through high school and beyond. With US staff based out of Maine and two Tanzanian staff members on the ground in Arusha, TGFT partners with local NGOs to seek out the best programs, ideas, and resources to create sustainable and impactful change.

In this role, I’ll be living outside of Arusha at the recently opened Girls Center. When the girls are on break from classes about five months out of the year we will be living there together working to keep them motivated, inspired, and on track for their national exams as well as coordinating as many development opportunities as we can. For the times that the girls are not at the Center, we will be implementing a community outreach program. There is a lot of work to be done as it is a young program so I am really excited to be a part of building it up.

I am still here in Los Angeles rushing to make preparations to depart in July. I’m so grateful for the opportunity to work with such strong young women in this beautiful part of the world. I’m also grateful to AGS for all of the opportunities that have come my way as a result of my time there. Please check out the website and come volunteer! www.girlsfoundationoftanzania.org

Save the Date

20th Anniversary of AGS and Alumni Reunion
June 2014.
More to come.