



DEVELOPMENT  
THROUGH  
EMPOWERMENT



## Great Work Is Happening!

We wish to use this time to thank all our volunteers for the incredible amount of work they've done and do every day.

### RECOGNITION

Thanks to all those who have given selflessly over the years to further our cause. Volunteers have been and continue to be a large part of our ability to make change happen in bringing water and hope to rural villagers.

Since January 2013 we've had 266 volunteers, an average of 100 per year. Their willingness to help and passion for the work we do makes a huge difference in what can be accomplished and how quickly. There are plenty of project activities anyone can participate in year-round.



LEARN MORE

Your support keeps our projects moving forward - [help now](#).

### MAKE AN IMPACT

You too can join in making change.

If you have been or are seeking a worthy cause to help, and where you can make new friends, we welcome you to join us.

Here's what a few volunteers had to say about their experience:

"Everyone was very friendly, nice, and I feel that even the little work done while there can have a lasting impact on those who received the products."

"What Trailblazer is doing for the Cambodian community is great here and more people should be involved."

"A great team and an inspirational project. Everyone was very welcoming and to work with helping to install the filters at school and villages was an incredible experience. Thank you."

"It is a great opportunity to get involved in a project which is changing peoples lives for the better."

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

### Heather Gaines

#### What inspired you to volunteer with Trailblazer?

I was inspired to volunteer with the Trailblazer Foundation because I was really impressed by the work Trailblazer was doing in Cambodia. I'm passionate about finding ways to empower local



communities and Trailblazer's community-focused style of development does just that, empowering local communities by working together with the communities to find sustainable, long-term solutions to the problems at hand. I also liked that Trailblazer provides locally built, affordable, and easily maintained equipment, as well as providing training to local villagers on the use and maintenance of the equipment. This encourages villagers to take ownership of the project and allows Trailblazer to eventually exit the stage, which I believe is important.

Access to clean water is one of the most pressing issues facing the communities where Trailblazer works, and so the majority of Trailblazer's projects are centered around providing clean water. I was especially keen to work on clean water projects because I know that providing access to clean water helps to improve health, alleviate poverty, and increase people's overall quality of life. I believe access to clean water truly changes everything, allowing communities to grow and prosper and so I felt that working with the Trailblazer Foundation would be a very rewarding experience - and it was!

#### What did you like the most of the experience?

One of the things that I loved best about volunteering with the Trailblazer Foundation is that you could really see the impact you were having from day one. From the very first moment, I could understand how the work I was doing at Trailblazer would benefit people in the local community. And, better yet, just days after I started volunteering, I was able to go on water filter deliveries where I helped distribute and assemble water filters in local villages.

The highlight of the water filter deliveries was being able to meet the families that were receiving the water filters and see the end result of all our hard work. Having the opportunity to see exactly where your time and effort are going makes a world of difference and really drives home the importance of the life-changing work Trailblazer is doing.

In the span of my 10 weeks at Trailblazer, I was able to help the Water Filter Team build, distribute, and assemble 85 water filters in 10 different villages. It was such an incredibly rewarding experience that I won't soon forget!

#### Have you had other volunteer experiences? If so, what and where?

I've been volunteering for as long as I can remember, both at home and abroad. In addition to volunteering with the Trailblazer Foundation, some of my recent volunteer work has included tutoring at an after school program for at-risk youth in

Hattiesburg, MS; volunteering at the Molson Canadian Hockey House at the Vancouver Winter Olympics; and teaching and developing EFL curriculum for underprivileged students in Nong Khai, Thailand with Openmind Projects. Currently, I volunteer once a week with the Cancer Society in the Oncology Department at Auckland City Hospital and once a week with the Auckland City Mission in the food bank.

All of my volunteer experiences impact my life in some way, offering new insights and expanding my point of view, but no experience has had as lasting an impression on me as my time spent with the Trailblazer Foundation. Immediately being able to see the impact I was having in the lives of the people I met really emphasized the importance of the work being done. It was a time in my life when I truly felt like I was making a difference, and I feel like the experience will be one that stays with me forever, having long reaching effects into the future.

**Where do you live?**

I currently live in New Zealand but was born and raised in Memphis, TN. For more than a decade now, I've been traveling the world; studying, working, and volunteering in countries throughout Europe, Asia, and Oceania.

**Did your volunteer experience impact the work you do now? How?**

My time volunteering with the Trailblazer Foundation impacted my outlook on life, making me acutely aware of the struggles faced by millions of people around the world who lack access to clean water every day. Though my current job is not based on the work I did with Trailblazer, this awareness influences every area of my personal and professional life in some way. Even now, three years later, I still feel just as passionately about the need for access to clean water for everyone, and I use whatever platforms I have available to me to encourage others to become committed to this cause.

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