

# Peace Corps Draws AQ Grad to Philippines

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Community service has been part and parcel of Julie Fredrick's life for as long as she can remember. While attending Aquinas (1998-2002), Fredrick tutored students at St. Andrew's elementary, worked with Campus Ministry, and even volunteered at a national park in Maine.

"But I'd always wanted to do missionary work," says the Aquinas alumna, who graduated this past May.

That's why Fredrick has decided to put her teaching abilities to use not in a fluorescent lighted American classroom, but rather in the sultry mountains of the Philippines. Fredrick began a two-year stint in the Peace Corps this summer, using the skills she learned in Aquinas education classes to teach English in a rural community.

"I'll be helping teachers improve their English fluency and I'll work with kids in the classroom," Fredrick says. "I love volunteering and children and travel so this is a perfect fit." Fredrick will be living with a host family and traveling to several communities, making classroom observations and participating in training workshops.

Conditions will likely be more primitive than what she is used to, but Fredrick says the semester she spent living in a teepee on a Native American reservation as part of the Aquinas study program in Montana has prepared her for that possibility.

"I've taken so much for granted and I want to learn an appreciation for what I have," she says.

Staff members who have worked with Fredrick say that this latest effort testifies to her selfless nature. "Julie is an excellent example of someone who uses her gifts and abilities to make a difference in the world today," says Coordinator of Service Learning Eric Bridge.

The College acknowledged that fact formally in May when it presented Fredrick with the Monsignor Bukowski Award, an honor given annually to a senior who exhibits outstanding service throughout his or her four years at Aquinas.

Fredrick doesn't miss any chance to give back to the community. When she cut her foot long hair in preparation for the tropical temperatures she will encounter the next two years, Fredrick donated it to Locks of Love, an organization that provides wigs to disadvantaged children who suffer from health-related hair loss.

She insists that she isn't nervous about her adventure. Unrest in the Middle East has touched areas of the Philippines, but the Peace Corps places participants in safe locations, she says, and her sense of mission is enough to see her through.

"I'm more excited than nervous," she says. "I find fulfillment in helping others and in trying to add to their lives in whatever way I can."