

Students in Service—In Oakland, California

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Brian Wallis '02 volunteered for a year of service through the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. He is stationed in Oakland working for a nonprofit organization called Sports4kids. Sports4kids sends one site coordinator to each of 50 different schools in the greater Oakland area. Wallis is assigned to Hoover Elementary in the heart of a rough West Oakland area. At Hoover, his responsibilities include trying to initiate as many games at recess as possible; running a fourth and fifth grade junior coach program that trains students to be leaders on the playground to get games going; teaching K-3 PE classes; and running a two and a half hour after-school program for fourth and fifth graders.

Brian says, "This has been one of the best experiences of my life because I now have a better understanding of what life 'in the hood' is really like. Parents in poverty are just as determined to give their children the best opportunity as any well-off family. I have learned that selflessly giving yourself to a community emanates into a deep satisfaction. I have really enjoyed being the minority in many situations because I realize the richness that comes from diversity. The Hoover community has brought so much joy to my life, I feel like I am the one learning from the students, rather than the students learning from me."