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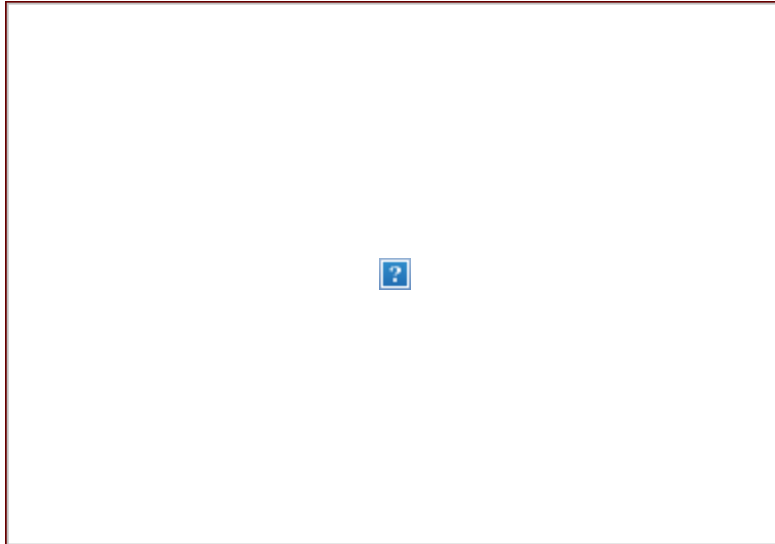
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Nirvana Douglas from Gerrards Cross, Bucks who served in Tanzania



[Nirvana and her room-mate](#)

I HAD A wonderful time teaching at Ruaha Secondary School in Iringa, Tanzania. I met some amazing people and it was an unforgettable experience. My work was teaching some English, science, computers and Moral Education, as well as helping with the development of the Moral Education curriculum they are developing and trying to incorporate into the rest of the work. I shared a small house with a Tanzanian Bahá'í girl

who worked at the school.

The accommodation was very basic, as I'd expected, but perfectly adequate. I think living there made me realize just how little we need to live on and how many of the comforts we have are really unnecessary. It was a lovely place to live, though noisy at times, because I was so close to the students, whom I loved, so living by them allowed me to make some really good friends.

The school has 50-60 Bahá'í students, about 10% of the school, and organises all sorts of events and teaching trips, into the villages and so on. The only problem with these was that I wasn't much use in the villages with my limited Kiswahili and needed everything translated for me. There was a slight language problem but secondary schools are taught in English, although the standard isn't particularly high.

I also managed to get some travelling in while I was out there; to the Bahá'í temple in Uganda, a brief visit to Zambia and the Banani school there, a safari and also took a very successful school trip up Mt Kilimanjaro! I was very sorry to leave, and miss all of my students, fellow volunteers and everyone else I met.

Report by Georgia Nash from Reading who returned from her YoS this summer

The House of Worship, New Delhi, India

SERVING AT the House of Worship in Delhi was a great starting point for my Year of Service. I was (as I imagine many other youth year of service volunteers are) somewhat daunted at the idea of going to the other side of the world on my own where I didn't know anyone. However, to allay your fears (and perhaps your parents') when you arrive in Delhi you are picked up from the airport and taken straight to the Volunteer House at the

When you are picked up from the airport and taken straight to the volunteer house at the temple. There are dorm parents there to welcome you (I was welcomed by the dorm "mum" who told me she was my "Indian Mother" now). If you have ever been to Israel on pilgrimage you will probably recognise the kind of feeling you get coming to a Bahá'í environment such as this. It felt like coming home.

You can serve at the Lotus Temple for a period between one and three months and I think that the experience is totally unique for everyone. As the volunteers are continually coming and going, you meet a lot of people, from all over India and the world. My experience was amazing. I found that as you are working, eating, living and praying with these people you form close bonds very quickly.

The time of year that you serve there would definitely have an impact on your experience of service. I served in the winter months, and believe me, it does get cold in Delhi, especially when you are wearing thin cotton Indian clothing. So if you are going to be serving between November and February, do bring some warm clothes! (especially socks!) Also the hours are shorter in winter (9 till 6), so its not such a hard working day as in summer. The winter months also usually draw a more international crowd of visitors to the temple so there is a greater need for English speaking volunteers. Although it would be useful to learn some Hindi, it is by no means a requirement of service.

Thailand

There are a few service opportunities in Thailand: the school in Yasothon and the kindergarten in Nongkhai. I served in Nongkhai for six weeks, helping out in any way I could in the kindergarten (it really helps if you know songs and games to play with kids). Nongkhai needs volunteers who will work with the local community. In hindsight, having completed the Ruhi books beforehand would have greatly assisted my service. Volunteers are expected to set up the three core activities. An important issue for volunteers wishing to go there, is for them to familiarise themselves with the culture.

Thailand has not been taking international volunteers for long and so is still in the early stages of organising some kind of briefing for them on arrival. Dress and behave modestly (nothing at all revealing) despite what other young people seem to be doing around you! Also Thai people are impeccably clean, so don't be messy in anything you do – especially if you are staying in the Bahá'í Centre: the whole local community will notice you and you have to remember that you are a representative for the Bahá'ís.

However, don't worry, everyone is really friendly and smiles all the time!

