

Senior Travel Making Retirement Count

A Volunteer Plants Seeds of Hope in Tanzania

By: Amy Warren and Winsin Hsieh

Peter Knowles, a spirited 77-year-old English-American has tackled retirement with vigor and youthful exuberance. After losing his wife to cancer a few years ago, he found meaning through volunteer activities close to home in Naples, Florida, as well as around the world. An emergency room volunteer in the Naples Community Hospital, Peter coupled his ascent of the 19,000-foot Mt. Kilimanjaro last year with fundraising for the hospital's stroke program, raising more than \$20,000.



Peter first visited the home to Mt. Kilimanjaro while on business in Tanzania as an international banker. He's been trekking there ever since, though his greatest feats remain close to the ground, where he is promoting sustainable agriculture.

Peter's experience with sustainable agriculture in Tanzania developed through his participation a year and a half ago in Global Service Corps (GSC), a non-profit volunteer abroad organization. Peter participated as a volunteer in GSC's sustainable agriculture program for four weeks. Like other GSC volunteers, he lived with a local family and learned skills that helped him to contribute to the local community, such as building organic plots with farmers, leading bio intensive agriculture trainings, and teaching English to villagers.

The need for sustainable agriculture was obvious to Peter, who went on to found Hearts Helping Hands Inc., a non-profit corporation that is working with GSC to provide farming supplies and equipment for agricultural programs in Tanzania. Peter was inspired to start this venture when, as a volunteer, he noticed the farmers with whom he was working were in need of more basic tools, forks, hoes, watering cans, seeds, and plants. Peter has also contributed money for the development of a community market for locally grown organic produce.

In addition to working on these projects, Peter also maintains close ties with The Sibusiso Foundation (www.edupro.nl/sibusiso/index.html), which is a non-profit organization dedicated to schooling Tanzania's vulnerable, mentally disabled children and helping them to develop their potential and integrate into society.

For more info

Global Service Corps' International Volunteer and Intern Programs (from two weeks to six months), 300 Broadway, Ste. 28, San Francisco, CA 94133-3312; Tel. 415-788-3666 x128; gsc@globalservicecorps.org, www.globalservicecorps.org. Academic credit is available and programs are tax deductible.

Amy Warren, the Communications Director for Global Service Corps, and Winsun Hsieh are both MBAs with an un-businesslike passion for international travel and helping others. They have both volunteered abroad in recent years.