

# Nancy Meyer '02



Sometimes serving others can mean traveling halfway around the world. For Nancy Meyer, her desire to help took her to Azerbaijan where she worked with the Peace Corps as a community economic development volunteer. “My time there was very rewarding,” she said. “I met many interesting people, learned a new language, and talked to locals about the United States while they shared their background and culture with me.” Nancy worked with a nongovernmental organization that supported farmers, and she also taught English classes to groups of students.

During her eight-month stay in Azerbaijan, Nancy found herself challenged by problems she saw in the newly democratic society. “I learned to greatly admire individuals who do development work in countries like this and who slowly, step-by-step, help bring the struggling country back on its feet.”

Her passion for service blossomed long before Azerbaijan, though. Nancy worked as a manager of volunteers at Second Helpings in Indianapolis, a food rescue, job training, and hunger relief organization. “After working for three years with people who were so devoted and excited about volunteering for our organization,” she said, “it was hard for me not to catch their contagious sense of enthusiasm for helping others.”

Nancy volunteered with the Jaycees serving on their board of directors, and also implemented community projects to help those in need. “Working with the Jaycees was my best service experience because it provided leadership opportunities as well as great networking opportunities with many other socially aware young professionals,” she said. “I had the chance to develop and organize projects that I was interested in, which I really enjoyed.” Nancy also volunteered with the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir and Riley’s Children Hospital. “Volunteering is a great way to give back to the community while doing something personally rewarding at the same time,” she said.

After so many volunteer experiences, Nancy feels that her perspective of life in the world has changed. “Volunteering helps to distract me from those things in my life which I may think are less than perfect while helping me instead to focus on people with worries greater than my own,” she said. “All of this has helped me feel more grounded in my own life and more confident in everything that I do.”

Now that she is back in the United States, Nancy hopes to work in a nonprofit organization and is thinking about pursuing a master’s degree, possibly in public administration. “I always felt like I got so much more pleasure out of volunteering than the efforts that I put in,” she said. “It’s not that I didn’t work hard at my volunteer activities, but I felt good about what I was doing. It’s always a win-win situation, and it’s hard not to feel good about that.” —*Jennifer Huber*

INDEX OF PHOTOGRAPHS:  
IDENTIFICATIONS & PERMISSIONS

---

*Nancy Meyer '02*

(p. 66) Nancy Meyer. Personal photograph provided by Nancy Meyer with permission to reprint.