

Kristina Russell '03 '04



Kristina Russell's passion for life is obvious. A 2003 and 2004 graduate of the University of Indianapolis, Kristina works as an occupational therapist and has dedicated herself to helping others. "Most of my volunteer activities involve children," she said. "The children are our future, and they deserve nothing but the best as they grow and figure out who they are."

As an undergraduate, Kristina worked with College Mentors for Kids at the University and was paired with a little sister through Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Central Indiana. "My little sister and I had such a great time and really connected, so we continued our match after I graduated," Kristina said.

Through her work with occupational therapy, Kristina has helped to start a basketball league for children with special needs. "It has been fun volunteering each Saturday to help the kids learn new skills

and participate as part of a team," she said. "We hope to continue this with other sports throughout the year." Kristina also serves on the program committee and volunteers as a counselor for CHAMP Camp, a summer camp for children with respiratory needs. "My little sister, the kids at camp, and the kids I work with each day teach me more about life that I could ever learn on my own," she said. "They are so carefree, fun-loving, accepting, and trusting, yet they've been through so much. They keep a smile on their faces and are the first to cheer for their friends' successes. They're not worried about how to get ahead or what the future holds. They take each day as it comes and live life to its fullest."

Sharing her gifts with others—whether it is through lending a hand, comforting others, or just "being crazy," as she puts it—is her passion. "The Lord has blessed my life in ways I can't even believe," she said. "I feel the need to share this with others. We all deserve happiness and blessings, and if I can help others experience this joy, why shouldn't I?"

She hopes that more people will become involved with volunteering. "It can be intimidating to get started, especially when you're unsure of your own abilities and comfort levels," she said. "But if you get to know yourself and your values, you'll be able to jump in somewhere. The ideal place to volunteer is somewhere that you feel comfortable and already fit in."

Volunteering has helped Kristina to understand that her time is one of the most valuable gifts she can give. "God did not put me here for me to be alone and self-centered. He wants me to enjoy life and to live it! For me, living life means spending time with other people. I know that my time with other people is more important to me than how much money I make or what car I drive," she said. "I can only hope that my outlook on life will be reflected to others who can make a difference." —Jennifer Huber

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