

You Stay Hopeful and Optimistic: "I've never felt such an amazing sense of community," says Amanda Anderson-Green, a then twenty-five-year-old medical researcher from Seattle who spent three weeks on a Cross-Cultural Solutions volunteer vacation in Ghana through Travelocity's Travel for Good program.

She went to volunteer at a center with HIV-positive people and AIDS orphans. "I was struck by the simplicity of it. People talked with me as if I was their neighbor. They were so open, friendly, and accepting. They'd put their arms around me and thank me for coming." Now back in Seattle, she says, "I am still receiving the gifts from my trip. I knew I would have a rewarding adventure, but I had no idea how much going abroad would impact my views of community, happiness, and service here at home."

You Gain Appreciation for Other People and Places: Jonathan Orc thought Africa was a very bad place: hot, poor, full of sickness and dirt. But he fell in love with people in Mali while teaching English and helping build a school. "We arrived at night, but they had been waiting for us all day long....I felt that I belonged there, like they were just saving a spot for me in their village the whole time. Before, I used to see Africa as a crappy place, but now I see it as a paradise... Africa is a beautiful and extraordinary place that changed my life."