

An India Adventure!

Stonehill alums currently volunteering with the Extension India program recently returned to their service site in Agartala, India from a month-long trip exploring the country.

Here is their story...

Lucy Rose Moller '11 → Nothing compares to the cool night air. Head out the window everything whizzing past. Stars glowing in the night sky. Stillness. Just like nothing comes close to the traffic jams or the orchestra of honking horns at some blasphemous hour. Or the sound your heart makes when you're catapulted off your seat while driving on a road that feels like it's being paved as you go. Lest we forget, the high-pitched call for 'CHAI!!' on loop from dawn to dusk. Trains. Buses. Rickshas. Taxis. In -out- and back in again. East. South. North. *And there we were: joining the rhythmic hum of Indian motion caught in a beautiful web of noise and activity. Yet, another adventure during our year-long journey.*

Tom McKenney '11 → When growing up I often found daytrips enjoyable, but usually forgettable. I've found daytrips in India are anything but forgettable. Just a few days into our month long holiday travels through India, we journeyed on an over-night bus ride to Kanyakumari, which is the southernmost point of the subcontinent. We'd only spend half a day here until we catch another bus to Kerala so my expectations had been low. Surprise! Just as the sun began to rise we stood on a rocky beach with thousands of pilgrims who applauded the serene golden sky. The sight was unforgettable as the Indian spirit consumed while standing in the shadows of a magnificent Hindu temple. *Having the opportunity to travel and be part of the some of the most enchanting places in the world is an aspect of Stonehill Extension India that makes it a truly special program.*



Charlotte Tuminelli '11 → After Kanyakumari, we met up with Fr. Joe Paul from Holy Cross School. We traveled along winding roads through lush jungles to reach the state of Kerala. After a few nights in the capital city, Trivandrum, and one on a houseboat in the Kerala backwaters, it was time to stay with Fr. Joe Paul's family. We were welcomed with open arms and giant smiles. I couldn't stop thinking how fortunate we were to have the chance to stay with an Indian family—and not just any family but that of someone we've come to know and love. *To me, this was what our Stonehill Extension trip was about: finding ways to see this country through the lens of a volunteer; finding ways to immerse ourselves in Indian culture and be part of a family, even if only for a short time.* We were lucky enough to visit the homes of several of the Holy Cross fathers, and were always greeted with big smiles and bigger meals. Stuffed to the brim with food and kindness, we were ready to head on to the next stop on our journey.



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Christa Bogdanow '11 → Next stop – Goa! It's the smallest state in India yet it has a lot to offer if you love the beach, relaxing in the sun or going on adventures. We spent four days in a very small town called Bogmalo, close to Vasco da Gama, the state capital. Our hotel was a stone's throw from the beach and what a beautiful and pristine beach it was! I was in the ocean most of the day and only left it to sleep, sunbathe or eat at one of the unique restaurants right on the beach.



Time seemed to move much more slowly in Goa and I enjoyed watching Indian families in the water: the men in bathing suits and the women in full Indian dress. The locals were exceptionally kind and generous and helped us out when most restaurants closed for state elections. I have learned to accept unpredictable events such as these that even followed us to the small town of Bogmalo. It helps me go with the flow and see the bigger picture: *a year in India is unpredictable in many ways, but we grow and mature through learning how to deal with difficult situations.*



Iain Flannery '11 → Darjeeling is one of the few places in the world that literally takes my breath away. It was the last stop on our tour of the subcontinent and I couldn't have asked for a more fitting end to our extraordinary journey. Darjeeling, like all of our stops in India, is memorable and surprising in its own unique way. The warm hospitality of the town's citizens combined with its ethereal views of the Himalayas make Darjeeling a sort of heaven on earth. However, these astonishing qualities of the town pale in comparison to the lush tea gardens visible on the mountains and the flavorful cups of tea they produce. For me personally my favorite part of Darjeeling (and possibly the whole trip) was our ride on the river rapids below the town.

Having no previous experience riding the waves, I had my reservations but I nonetheless dove head first (literally!) into the glacial waters that awaited us. It was an unforgettable experience for me and looking back I see that excursion as a sort of parallel to our year here in India. Like those choppy rapids in the Teesta River, *a year of service in India may seem daunting at first but if you're daring enough to push yourself out of your comfort zone, you may find that you're in for a more inspiring and meaningful year than you can possibly imagine!*

Stonehill Extension India is Still Accepting Applications for the 2013 Year!
(January—December 2013)

Contact Kris Silva at ksilva@stonehill.edu or 508-565-1559 for more information.

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