

From high school to helping in AmeriCorps

Student's experience shows that taking a year off before college can provide valuable experiences

BY LAURA PRATHER
Features Editor

Freshman Tristan Porter always thought he would go to college right out of high school, but his senior year Spring Break trip changed his mind and his life.

Porter said he had never gone anywhere on Spring Break before, but that year, his high school assistant choir teacher told him about his wife who had been in AmeriCorps.

After learning that AmeriCorps is the American version of the Peace Corps, Porter said he signed up for the network's weeklong program.

The program traveled to Ocean Springs, Miss., where the workers helped clean up and rebuild the houses of Hurricane Katrina victims, Porter said. He said he enjoyed the experience so much he wanted to do it again.

"We were about to leave, and we were talking about how it would be cool to come back and I just decided I wanted to come back for a year and build houses," Porter said. "I looked into it and found out that I could defer for a year and keep my scholarships, and I decided to do that."

Prior to this decision, Porter said he was choosing between Truman and University of

Minnesota for college.

He said when his parents asked him one night at dinner which school he had picked, they were shocked to hear him say neither. Porter said his parents were OK with his alternative decision despite their initial reactions.

"I figured college is still going to be there, and what is the hurt of just waiting a year?" he said.

After graduation, Porter packed his bags for an 11-month trip to Bay St. Louis, Miss.

Workers in the program received a \$5,000 educational scholarship and a \$400 stipend every two weeks to cover food, rent and other activities, he said.

Not having any previous construction experience, Porter said he was a little scared and nervous about the program.

"I don't know if [Habitat is] going to Bay St. Louis for spring break, but I know I am. There's no question about it."

Tristan Porter
Freshman

"I went down there and didn't even know how to swing a hammer," he said. "And my first day I was up on a roof swinging a hammer."

Porter said he never thought he would be interested in construction but he learned so much about it while in Mississippi that he considered it as a career.

"By the end, I was leading roofing crews and volunteers on a daily basis," he said.

The workers were on the different sites from about 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. during the week, Porter said. Over the 11-month period, he said they built 30 houses from start to finish.

"We were the fastest builders down there even



Rachel Tharp/Index

Freshman Tristan Porter deferred coming to Truman to build houses with AmeriCorps.

against private contractors," he said.

Since starting at Truman this year, Porter said he has already gotten involved with Habitat for Humanity and has been helping out with the current Habitat house.

He said he enjoys working with AmeriCorps and

Habitat because of how they help people in need.

"It makes me appreciate what I have," he said. "People down there lost everything. It didn't matter what your income was ... it hit everybody. It makes you appreciate what you have and to know that you can give back."

Porter said he thinks his freshman experience has been different from other students who came to college right out of high school because in Mississippi he was forced to adjust to being on his own more quickly.

"I am not missing being away from home," he said. "I like my family, but I'm used to it."

Aside from being more prepared for college, Porter said his experience with AmeriCorps prepared him for the future.

He said construction provided him with many skills that he will continue to use and that he plans on keeping in touch with everyone he met on the trip.

"I don't know if [Habitat is] going to Bay St. Louis for spring break, but I know I am," Porter said. "There's no question about it."

Quick facts What is AmeriCorps?

- More than 400,000 people have served for AmeriCorps since 1994.
- AmeriCorps consists of a network of local, state and national volunteer programs, connecting more than 70,000 people each year.
- More than 2,000 community organizations have received volunteer service from AmeriCorps members.

Source: www.americorps.org
Design by Jessica Rapp/Index



Health Talk
with Deb Holte, D.P.M.
Northeast Regional Medical Center
www.nermc.com

Healthy feet a must to stay in tip-top shape

Between 70 and 75 percent of Americans experience some form of foot problem in their lives, but most do not seek treatment. Foot health is important to overall health and should be taken seriously.

One of the most common foot problems that plagues Americans is ingrown toenails, which often develop because of improper toenail cutting.

Sometimes a podiatrist will need to surgically remove ingrown toenails. To help relieve pain and prevent further infection, soak the foot in warm water and Epsom salt.

Ingrown toenails can be prevented by cutting the nail straight across and never rounding it or cutting into the skin. Use a nail file to smooth the edges.

Foot odor, or bromhidrosis, is another common problem. The odor is caused by excessive sweating from the foot's more than 250,000 sweat glands. Closed shoes aggravate sweaty feet and allow bacteria to grow, which leads to more sweating and odor.

To prevent sweating, spray antiperspirant or rub cornstarch on the soles of the feet. Spraying Lysol in shoes can eliminate existing odors. A podiatrist can provide topical medication to help eliminate foot odor.

Another common foot problem is warts, growths caused by viruses that enter the skin through small cuts.

Teenagers are most prone to warts, but they can occur at any age. Although they may be painful, warts are benign. Warts usually occur from walking barefoot on dirty surfaces. Treatments range from oral and topical medications to surgery.

Women have four times as many

foot problems as men. These foot problems usually are caused by high heels.

Some tips for good foot health include:

- Wear properly fitted shoes and don't wear the same shoes every day.
- Wash feet regularly, especially between toes, using warm water and soap with a moisturizer.
- Inspect feet regularly and pay attention to changes in color and temperature. Also look for thick or discolored nails, peeling, scaling or cracking of the skin and any growths.
- Don't ignore foot pain, and if it persists, see a podiatrist.
- The best exercise for feet is walking, but avoid walking barefoot. Bare feet are more susceptible to infection.
- Shop for shoes in the afternoon or evening because feet swell throughout the day.
- Be cautious when using home treatments, as they often can worsen foot ailments.

Feet often show signs of many conditions, including diabetes, arthritis and circulatory disease. These signs include dry skin, brittle nails, burning and tingling sensations, feelings of cold, numbness and discoloration.

In all, more than 300 foot ailments exist. Being proactive in taking care of your feet can be very beneficial.

If you have questions or concerns about your feet, talk to your physician or contact Northeast Missouri Foot Clinic at 660-665-9000.

Momento from previous relationship provides hope for future reconciliation



Lauren Miller

sex and the 'ville

There was a Black and Decker food processor riding shotgun in my car. It silently mocked me, constantly and cruelly.

I moved it to the back seat. It did not stop.

I moved it to the trunk. It still sat on my mind.

Even now, tucked away in the silence of my room, that food processor haunts my thoughts.

It had been a housewarming gift for The Boy. He gave it back just two days ago after I ended our relationship. It came with a DVD player and a smattering of various other items. I told him to keep everything — I have no need for a DVD player or a food processor.

I think I will probably just leave it all where it is, just in case I desperately need to slice and dice something one day soon.

A breakup consumes all thoughts. It floats in and out of the mind, finding the most obscure way to screw with your emotions.

The food processor is my own personal demon. It keeps reminding me of our nights watching "Iron Chef," "Giada" or "Scrubs." It keeps making songs play about being together forever. It keeps making starry-eyed couples walk past me. It keeps filling me with doubt.

Did I really do what was best?

We tried to make it work, and we failed. The Boy and I both agreed that breaking up was probably the wisest course of action.

It was, in all honesty, the calmest breakup I ever have experienced. There is no hate, no animosity, no fault, no blame.

Still, I ask, did I really do what was best?

In 20 minutes' time, I turned "The One" into "one of."

I am left with a silent hope that we can work it out later down the road. Knowing we still love each other, instead of hate each other, might be the one thing that keeps us friends. Maybe, just maybe, that friendship one day might morph back into more.

That is all I am left with — that hope.

And a daunting food processor that keeps telling me that I ruined all hope, that I am destined to be miserable and alone, that I did it to myself, and worst of all, that I wrecked my own and another's happiness.

All I can say is, "I'm sorry." And I mean it.

I am sorry I could not wait. I am sorry I wanted more. I am sorry if I was demanding or needy. I am

sorry if any exchange between us seemed cold or callous. I am sorry for those 20 tear-stained minutes on the phone.

I am sorry we never used the food processor, that we never gave it a chance to slice, dice, chop and shred.

"A breakup consumes all thoughts. It floats in and out of the mind, finding the most obscure way to screw with your emotions."

The meals we could have made with it linger in my head. Pastas and burgers and salads and various desserts with crumbly crusts.

The food processor keeps asking me to call The Boy, so he can take it back. The 90 percent of me that is sure I made the right decision has no voice compared to the 10 percent that doubts.

And I could call. I want to ask him how his trip to Springfield was. I want to know how his race went Saturday. How is his family? How big is Bubba? Did he pass his test, and when is his next one? Does he really think he failed, or did he just get a low B? Yes, there is a difference.

I want him to know that my brother is thinking about being a physicist and that my mom finished her kitchen. Does he know I am thinking about graduate school in New York? Does he know I am thinking about him?

Does he know I still hope? That is why I kept the food processor.

Because one day, he might want it back. Because one day, we might need it to make the never-made meal. Because one day, we might laugh at the fact that I kept it.

And if that hope falls through, I kept it because it reminds me of him.

And because one day I undoubtedly will need to slice and dice for another meal for another someone.

LONG'S

Auto Body

Quality Collision Center

REMEMBER,
you have the right to have your car repaired by your choice of a body shop

660-627-2510
2807 S. Haliburton St.
Kirkville, MO 63501

VISA MasterCard
Discover

10% Discount on deductibles with Student ID

Rider Drug

Your Rxperts

Keeping the "Assist" in Pharmacist

TOP TEN REASONS TO COME TO RIDER DRUG

- #1 We're the pharmacy closest to campus
- #2 We have a drive-up window
- #3 Save time and gas with FREE Kirksville delivery, free mailing everywhere!
- #4 Order refills online at www.riderdrug.com
- #5 We're the pharmacy closest to campus
- #6 FREE consultation about your prescription
- #7 Most insurance and Medicaid programs honored
- #8 We're the pharmacy closest to campus
- #9 We "keep the assist in pharmacist"
- #10 We're the pharmacy closest to campus

1207 S. Baltimore
(660) 665-4666