

MIZZOU

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Around the Columns

Mizzou's global perspective

As a Peace Corps volunteer in Ecuador from 1999 to 2001, Craig Hutton worked with residents of a tiny village on the eastern edge of the Andes Mountains to establish small organic gardens and dairy operations. During that assignment he discovered that the challenges those villagers face transcend national boundaries. “There are some universal concerns: keeping your family healthy and putting food on the table,” says Hutton, who is working on a master’s degree in geography at MU.

As he counseled the villagers about farm management and record keeping, they all learned important lessons about working together and with community organizations, and when to reach out for help. “It’s important to be flexible,” Hutton says. “You have to learn when to say yes, when to say no and when to let things bubble along on their own.”

It’s that blend of pragmatism and world experience that a handful of



Craig Hutton helped villagers in the Andes Mountains establish small-scale gardens and dairy operations as a Peace Corps volunteer in Ecuador. Now, as a geography graduate student and Peace Corps fellow at Mizzou, he shares his international perspective by teaching classes and leading programs.

former Peace Corps volunteers are bringing to MU. They are taking the community development skills they learned in faraway countries and putting them to work in mid-Missouri.

MU's Peace Corps Fellows program, which began in fall 2007, provides those former volunteers a fellowship to work toward a master's degree. In exchange, the fellows spend at least 10 hours a week working in the community on basic issues such as food and housing. They also share their international perspectives with the campus by teaching classes and leading programs that focus on global issues.

MU is one of nearly 50 colleges and universities around the country that participate in the Peace Corps Fellows program, but it offers a wider variety of degree options than many schools, says Don Spiers, associate professor of animal sciences, who directs Mizzou's program. "The Peace Corps Fellows program is one way we're trying to 'internationalize' MU so our students can have a global experience without leaving campus."

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Published by MIZZOU magazine, 109 Reynolds Alumni Center, Columbia, MO 65211 | Phone: 573-882-5916 |
E-mail: Mizzou@missouri.edu

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