

# ADVENTURING into next CHAPTER

Senior travels to Philippines, works in ministry after graduation

story by a. rodriguez

All she can take with her are two bags. She has to fit what she can of her life into the luggage and travel over 8,000 miles away from home to discover what else is out there, to find the second story. She hoped to discover it in San Juan, La Union, Philippines.

Kristen Moyers [12] never dreamed of going to college right after graduation. Since her first visit to the Philippines in sixth grade, she realized there was more to life after high school. When senior year arrived, she planned to travel to the Philippines on July 15 and volunteer at the Arise and Rebuild Ministries [ARM] Ministry.

"I have lived a very privileged life," Moyers said. "I'm not going to go to college just so I cannot be thankful for it. I want to go and experience a place that is thankful for everything. I want to come back and be grateful for everything that I have. I want to come back seeing a different side of the story."

The ARM Ministry fights to overcome child poverty through a biblical-based child development initiative. It invests in children into adulthood. The Child Sponsorship Program allows sponsors to connect with Filipino children and provide financial assistance for education. The Moyers' family has previous experience with this program. They sponsored a young woman who graduated last year with a masters in education.

"It's very difficult to get back on your feet when you don't have anything to feed your family," Moyers said. "By putting their faith in something bigger and knowing that He'll take care of them. That knowledge raises them up. It helps rebuild their lives. It gives their kids a place where they can go, get sponsored and get an education."

Moyers' father, Jeff Moyers [alum '85], was elected president of the ARM Ministry board in the fall of 2011. The Moyers family visited the ministry again in 2013 when Kristen was a junior, and she came back with a whole new idea of how she

could affect people.

"They [the ministry workers] literally live the life that I always wanted, between farming and being one with what they have and utilizing their abilities," she said. "I want to be able to help in any way I can because they don't have the same opportunities."

Moyers considers herself a homebody. However, she calls the Philippines her home because she has extended family there.

"It's not like I'm going somewhere where I don't know anyone or where I don't feel accepted or don't belong," she said. "I'm not going to be away from family. I'll just be with a different family. It's like going to live with some cousins in an extremely far away place."

For the past two years, she has been involved in the FFA program and this year she was the president of the organization. She has competed on the Milk Qualities and Products team and qualified for the state competition twice. While in the Philippines, Moyers will take care of the agricultural responsibilities since most of the food for the ministry is grown at the location. She will raise goats, chickens, ducks, along with cocoa and cashew trees.

"I'm completely different from the person who I was a year ago, and FFA is the reason why," she said. "It made me step out of my comfort zone, be social and take responsibility for other people. In the Philippines, I'll be working on a close-knit team of people who are passionate about others."

After she gets back from the Philippines, Moyers dreams of opening up a family-run business. She plans to use the experience and knowledge from working at the ARM Ministry to assist her.

"It is a very difficult task to see that life does not stop when you turn eighteen and graduate," Moyers said. "In retrospect, that's just the beginning. The stuff you learn now does make a difference. You can't see that now because you hate that you are given homework for it. But that's the second side of the story and you just haven't gotten there yet."



All smiles, Tina Moyers [alum '85], Kristen Moyers [12], Jeff Moyers [alum '85], and Jake Moyers [alum '11] celebrate in front of their new "Kubo Kubo," or Nipa hut. Kristen will live in this hut during her time in the Philippines. "I'll have my ukulele, my kindle and my ipod," Kristen said. "So I'll have books and music, the things that keep me sane at home." photo courtesy of moyers family



After saying goodbye before they left, the Moyers' family pose with Hanna, Jenny and Jessie Rose who were part of the sponsorship program. Jessie Rose graduated college with major in criminal justice. "I want to be able to say that I went and that I did," Kristen Moyers [12] said. "I don't want to come back and throw it all away. I want to remember and teach. I want people to understand what else is out there." photo courtesy of moyers family



Surrounded by memorabilia from her previous trips, Kristen Moyers [12] remembers her two adventures in the Philippines. "There's a certain amount of satisfaction knowing that if you just push through, it will be okay and that God is going to take care of you," Moyers said. "Giving them [Filipino natives] God and education gets them on to better things." photo by b. davis

After hiking for an hour up the mountain, the Moyers' family poses for a picture. The ARM Ministry is at the base of the mountain. "I don't want to start my life now not knowing what else is out there," Kristen Moyers [12] said. "If you spend your entire life climbing to the top and never really knowing what you're climbing for, you'll reach the top and never even realize it." photo courtesy of moyers family



Balloon hat completed, Kristen Moyers [12] and Philippine native, Hanna, pose with their finished creations. Hanna was a part of the ARM sponsorship program and graduated college in 2014 with a Bachelor of Business Administration in finance management. photo courtesy of moyers family

With a pin marking her destination on the globe, Kristen Moyers [12] holds the Filipino flag. After going to the Philippines twice, Moyers understood where she wanted to go after high school. "I know one person can't change the world, but one person can start the change in the world," she said. photo by b. davis

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