

## EXONIANS SERVING OTHERS



Saba Berhie '04

Huntington, NY, community where she has lived since moving from Saudi Arabia at the age of 4. Last summer, for the third time, Berhie and Kumar ran a week long camp called Tools for Success that offers activities designed to improve children's reading and math skills, as well as games, crafts and sports activities. The camp, which they started with support from their parents but have paid for out of pocket ever since, takes place at the Scott Community Center in Huntington, and offers a change of pace and academic and cultural enrichment to the mostly lower-income children of all ages (kindergarten through sixth grade) who spend their days there in the summer.

For these children, taking advantage of academic enrichment "is not a capability issue, it's an opportunity issue," says Berhie, who attended Exeter for two years. "The kids are intelligent and eager to learn, and they respond to us because we are young and have similar ethnic backgrounds to theirs." Berhie's parents, both academics, are from Somalia and Ethiopia; her family is Muslim. Kumar's family is from India, and is Hindu. One favorite camp activity for the children is dressing up in the native costumes from around the world that Berhie and Kumar bring in, finding the costumes' countries of origin on the map and learning the indigenous names of various items. Besides giving children a leg up on school activities, says Berhie, the camp "lets kids see that there are other cultures in Huntington." Berhie and Kumar are now roommates at Northwestern University.

Recent Exeter graduate Saba Berhie '04 says being able to attend summer camp when she was younger was an important part of her life. Berhie and a friend, Sameera Kumar, wanted to make that kind of experience available to children in the

Michael Pope '05, from St. Simon's Island, GA, worked at a scuba shop and as a tour guide to raise the money he needed to spend three weeks of his summer working at an orphanage in the Ayacucho region of Peru. Pope had been slated to work at a local school, but a teacher's strike of several months meant school was not in session. He and other high-school-age volunteers with the organization Cross Cultural Solutions lived, hostel-style, in a house in Ayacucho. They spent the mornings at their assigned community service locations; in the afternoons they took Spanish classes, listened to guest lecturers or were free to explore and make friends with local people in the town square.

At the orphanage, which is home to approximately 50 children aged 4 to 15, Pope and the other volunteers played soccer and Frisbee, worked on art projects, held simple math classes and taught the children some English. On the advice of his godmother, who lives in Lima, Pope took pictures of the children to give to them as gifts. "Most of them have been abandoned or have parents in prison; they don't have pictures of themselves," he says. Most important, he simply spent time with the children. "They love to hold your hand, sit on your lap, ride on your back—so we carried them around a lot," he says. "They are just very eager for attention."

"I really like the South American culture," says Pope. This was his second visit to the continent, and he is looking forward to returning again. "Working with the children lets you experience firsthand what life is like in a third-world country, especially for children," he says. "It makes you appreciate living in the U.S. and everything you have. It would be nice if everyone could do something like this." ■



Michael Pope '05 (middle row, second from the left) with some of his friends at the Urpi Orphanage in Ayacucho, Peru.

ARTHUR DURITY

COURTESY OF MICHAEL POPE