



Community Partners

Program

Engineers Without Borders-USA

Project Location

Bolivia

CH2M HILL has partnered with Engineers Without Borders-USA (EWB-USA) since 2003. The organizations share a commitment to supporting service learning opportunities for engineering students and professionals through the implementation of sustainable engineering and construction projects in developing communities around the globe.

Engineers Without Borders-USA Student Continues Involvement as CH2M HILL Employee

CH2M HILL is always looking for engineers who want to make the world a better place. James Summey is exactly that kind of engineer. Hired in the summer of 2007, he brings a wealth of knowledge and motivation to help the firm continue its support of Engineers Without Borders-USA (EWB-USA).

While a student at North Carolina State University (NCSU), Summey began researching opportunities to put his mechanical engineering skills to use in a developing country. He discovered a fledgling student EWB-USA chapter at his university and with three other students began to grow the program. After returning from studying abroad in Peru, Summey immediately began planning EWB-NCSU's first projects. The chapter found a project in Bolivia but couldn't go on an assessment trip because they still lacked a professional mentor.

A graduate student at the university referred the EWB-NCSU team to a CH2M HILL employee in the Raleigh office. CH2M HILL employee Lucas Sharkey eagerly provided the needed professional experience and quickly became the team's mentor.

The last obstacle to getting EWB-NCSU off the ground was fundraising. Fortunately, due to Sharkey's understanding of CH2M HILL's support of EWB-USA, the chapter was able to secure a grant from CH2M HILL.

"Without the help from CH2M HILL we undoubtedly would have had to delay the trip," said Summey. "We had been fundraising for over a year and didn't have nearly half the amount necessary."

In 2006 the team traveled to Bolivia to survey the area and test water quality. They found that many of the children suffer from diarrhea and severe malnutrition due to contaminated water and lack of proper hygiene practices. Before they left, the students gave hygiene items, including toothbrushes, toothpaste and nail clippers to the children and provided lessons on how to use them. The children were grinning throughout the afternoon and squealed with happiness when the volunteers handed out fruit, a rare treat.

Summey considers his experience with EWB-NCSU "invaluable in the development of who I am and the type of engineer I am striving to be." EWB-NCSU gave him the skills to understand the cultural aspects of a problem in addition to the engineering challenges. Now, as an employee at a firm that avidly supports EWB-USA, he is looking to become a mentor to a student chapter. Summey is excited to tackle this new challenge and help grow the organization that does so much to change the world.