



YALE ALUMNI SERVICE CORPS

Batey Libertad, Dominican Republic

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| Community(s): | Batey Libertad |
| Partner: | Yspaniola |
| Projects: | Education/arts/athletics, business, career and life skills, construction, public health |
| # Volunteers: | 2019 (50) Trip Producer: Perry Sayles '88 |

Organized in collaboration with Yspaniola, a non-profit established by Yale undergraduates and alumni in 2009 to promote quality education in Batey Libertad, YASC organized a service to support this underserved community's efforts in education. Yspaniola operates a literacy center for students in first to seventh grade and an early childhood education program for younger children and provides a limited number of university scholarships for the most promising students in the community. As part of its program, Yspaniola regularly hosts service-learning programs for Yale undergraduates, as well as programs for students from other institutions. Yspaniola's expertise in teaching Dominican and Haitian history and culture made the service trip a particularly rewarding learning experience for YASC participants. Our volunteers organized projects in education/arts/athletics as we coordinated with the community's primary school to provide special education projects for the school's students including robotics, recycling, arts, creative writing, photography, drama, and music; business, career, and life skills counseling; construction improvements to Yspaniola's literacy center and early childhood learning facility; and addressed public health concerns including hygiene, dental care, eye care, sexual and reproductive health. Many adults suffer from hypertension and diabetes, and children's health issues such as ear infections and parasites. In coordination with Yspaniola and other local organizations, we developed a public health program to address some of the community's needs.

About the community:

Batey Libertad is a community of 1,000 residents located about an hour outside of Santiago, in the north of the Dominican Republic. The community is a mix of Haitians, Dominicans, and Dominicans of Haitian descent. Most residents are engaged in non-contractual agricultural and construction work and have little access to healthcare and other public services. Access to clean water is limited, and there are no public sanitation systems.