



YALE ALUMNI SERVICE CORPS

Matanzas, Cuba

Community(s):	Matanzas
Partner:	Foundation Antonio Núñez Jiménez for Nature and Humanity, Amistur Cuba
Projects:	Intercultural program: arts and education, environmental awareness, construction, photography, cultural exchange
# Volunteers:	2017 (96) Trip Producer: Najib El-Sayed '89 MPhil

The Yale Alumni Service Corps organized an Intercultural Program to Cuba in 2017. Our volunteers had an opportunity to work on arts and education for students, environmental awareness, construction, photography, and cultural exchange. We worked closely with the Foundation Antonio Núñez Jiménez for Nature and Humanity, a cultural and scientific non-governmental institution, dedicated to research and promotion of programs for the protection of the environment as it relates to culture and society. We also worked with Amistur Cuba; a specialized tourism agency whose focus is to organize intercultural programs designed to show life in Cuba through people-to-people programs. Our projects and excursions were designed to bring the Yale participants and members of the Cuban society together to foster mutual understanding and appreciation for the culture. Service projects included planting trees with a group of local Cuban volunteer youths to reforest 4-5 acres of land lying above the Bellamar Caves, building dry toilets, and a visual arts program including the art of photography with a local artist. YASC volunteers also learned about key environmental challenges facing Cuba and engaged in cultural exchange activities including a visit to a health clinic, an organization doing impressive work on multiple issues in Cuba's underserved population with a focus on the disabled and the elderly, and the Bellamar Caves, considered one of Cuba's national treasures.

About the community:

The Matanzas Province of Cuba on the northern shore of the island is known for its poets, culture, and Afro-Cuban folklore. Our activities took place on the outskirts of Matanzas, capital of the Matanzas Province on the northern shore of the island. The community has a limited number of local businesses including a car repair shop as well as subsistence agriculture and cattle raising. There is also a rapidly growing tourist industry in the area.