Jack Sauter

Jack attended The Science of Consciousness Conference held in Catalina Foothills, AZ. The conference has been held since 1994 and attempts to explore the phenomenon of conscious experience. It has become increasingly focused on the scientific basis of consciousness while also representing a range of disciplines, which, in addition to the physical sciences, includes philosophy and even some spiritual or mystical traditions. Jack had the opportunity to attend a wide variety of plenary and workshop sessions including quantum biology, artificial intelligence, the evolution of language, panpsychism, and the neural correlates of consciousness.

Generally speaking, the conference deals with attempting a multidisciplinary understanding of consciousness. While there is not a consensus on what exactly consciousness is, Jack's impression from the conference was that consciousness can be thought of as the subjective experience that we have in each moment. With advancements in neuroscience, there is a working assumption that consciousness is produced by the brain, but it is by no means the only theory. Jack found the conference fascinating and it further strengthened his interest in studying neuroscience at the graduate level. He is deeply interested in the brain, and especially enjoyed the sessions that dealt with the neuroscience of consciousness. The sessions also provided a deeper appreciation for just how complex the phenomenon of consciousness is and how little we truly know about it. “To watch tons of smart people disagree so strongly over something is an experience that is both humbling and exciting,” said Jack when reflecting on his experience at the conference. Jack also had the opportunity to meet and speak with numerous scholars within the field.

Following the conference, Jack commented on the possibilities for the future of consciousness research. “We've barely begun to understand what might contribute to conscious experience, but there are many exciting ideas that are empirically testable and thus stand a chance at refinement and progress. There are many interesting implications for consciousness research such as machine intelligence and the possibility of creating conscious robots; better understanding of psychological/neurological disorders and improved clinical methods; altering our states of consciousness through brain stimulation, drugs, brain augmentation, or many other methods.” Jack will continue his exploration of the multidisciplinary approaches to consciousness and is very excited about the research prospects he encountered at the conference.
Aspen Wheeler

Growing up, every report card or teachers’ interim comments went along the same lines: “She works hard, but…” and filled in the blank with the concept I had not managed to grasp. But, Nepal was different. By our second day in “the pit,” as it had been dubbed, I realized that I was hearing the same comment, but this time there was no “but”. It was taken as is: “she works hard”. The acceptance shown to me by the Nepali community allowed me to open up and extend that same understanding. By the end of the trip, it was not about the hole that was dug, but instead the relationships forged along the way.

Working hard had always been something that I just did. It was continually expected of me, whether from my coaches, teachers, or parents. What I realized while working in Nepal was that I was actually more intrinsically motivated. One of the most memorable examples, which I didn’t even notice until we returned from the trip, happened at the end of the third day. After we were finally done digging the hole, and reached the bottom of the hill, I realized that we were not quite done. We had a substantial pile of boulders ready to move from the bottom of the hill back up to where we had just finished working. By this time, our team was close; I was reminded of my days on the track team and the games we played after long practices. Inspired by this closeness and energy I felt with those around me, I started running the boulders up the hill, the whole time laughing, checking up with people, and making sure my team members drank enough water. For me, it was seeing our progress and our achievements together that gave me seemingly boundless energy.

There were many challenges in the pit, but I could get over the exhaustion, dehydration, and callouses, I had spent many days working much harder for much less. What was hard for me was reaching out and connecting with other people. When I worked, it was usually the end goal I was focused on, what I was going to do when I got to point A, B, or C. On the first day, it was not until Jason called me out of the pit at noon to tell me I had to take a break. On the second and third day, I learned that these breaks were ideal times to connect with those around me. By pushing myself constantly, I was moving our pit forward, but I was missing the connections around me.

I particularly surprised myself when Lisa, our group leader, called for people to go down into the trench and help the Nepali women dig deeper. My initial reaction was to put my head down and slink back, but I knew if I did not take advantage of these opportunities, I would be losing the gift of learning from another person. So, I got over my initial shyness and ended up partnering with a group of women who would chop up the dirt and then wait while I dug out the loose dirt; this way, we each got time to rest. During one of these resting moments I felt my hair being picked up and gently touched, the women were asking me what I did to get my hair to be that color. It took me a moment before I was able to respond. Something so simple helped me relax and begin to ask questions about their lifestyle, likes, wants, and generally their lives as a whole. We went from people from across the world, to taking selfies and laughing...as our pit grew deeper so did our bonds.
New Perspective After Journey to Nepal

Dayne Coveyou

The 10 days I spent in Nepal were a whirl of firsts: my first time out of the country, my first time trying curry, my first time traveling without family involvement, my first time on a service trip in or out of the United States, and my first time living among those in extreme poverty.

The McKearn Fellows Program gave me a wonderful opportunity to work with Wine to Water on a service trip to construct a clean water supply system in Madi, a small community in Chitwan, Nepal. That meant grueling manual labor all day for 4 days. I expected and mentally prepared for the work before taking off from Chicago, but I was not so much prepared for being the punchline of many jokes among the other volunteers. So, I put my experience being a younger sibling to use and ran with it. I became the de facto jester of our volunteer group. The others seemed to appreciate it, since it kept group moral up. I would much rather have been the source of amusement and high-spirits than deal with a group, half of whom were complete strangers, slowly becoming ornery as the days of labor passed.

Considering how impoverished our hosts were, it was impossible to leave Nepal personally unaffected. One day in particular left a lasting impression on me and how I view my fortune at being born in the United States. On our third day in Madi, we—the Wine to Water volunteers—worked with the local elementary school to teach basic water hygiene and paint some of the classrooms.

During one of our breaks, I was asked to show some pictures from home to the local children. Initially enthusiastic, I showed them what I had. By the time I reached pictures of my family’s last Christmas celebration, I was shamed, realizing what I was doing to them. These kids were getting a glimpse of the outside world devoid of need, devoid of want.

I walked out of that schoolyard afraid I had given those seven schoolkids justifiable envy or a false sense of hope, despite no evidence of the sort from them. They were just excited to see what my family’s clubhouse looked like. A despondent thought to be sure, it pushed me to question my “Why?” Why was I here? In Nepal? At Northern Illinois University? In the McKearn Fellows?

That night, placing myself in those kids’ shoes, I realized I would feel jealous, but I would not feel hopeless. Quite the contrary, determined would be a better word. I would be determined to see that wondrous world, free of need and want, become my reality. Coming to this conclusion, I felt a new shame that I judged the Nepali people relative to my standards. If nothing else, Nepal gave me a lesson in humility: pay attention to the needs, desires, and abilities of those around me.

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One of the major highlights of our trip to Nepal was visiting the local school to teach the students about water cleanliness, as well as help them in repainting some of the classrooms and latrines. This school, called Shree Krishnanagar Secondary School, contained grades pre-school through tenth grade, meaning the students ranged in age from four to sixteen. We developed different interactive activities to teach the kids about brushing their teeth, washing their hands, sanitation and clean water. Afterwards, we worked with the students to repaint some of the classrooms and latrines. This was a very rewarding experience, as not only was I helping children learn valuable skills, but I was able to overcome a language and cultural barrier as well.

Few of these children spoke English, and yet I was able to make a connection with all of them. I found that despite our cultural differences, we share many similarities, and are able to connect due to those similarities. The younger students put flowers in my hair and took turns holding my hand and dancing with me to Nepali music, and the older students took turns practicing their English skills and sharing their social media pages with me. All of the students were curious to learn about me and my culture, but I was also able to learn about them and their everyday experiences and struggles. It was an incredibly heartwarming experience to be embraced by these children, and I learned firsthand about the kindness and hospitality that is so central to Nepali culture.

Returning home, I found it difficult to re-adjust to the stark difference in the ease of life between the United States and Nepal. I saw so many people who did not even have the basic need of clean water, and I realized that I take so many things for granted. While at first I found myself angry at the day-to-day problems that we have, as they are so trivial in comparison to those that I witnessed in Nepal, I soon realized that I should focus on the lessons that I learned during my trip. I learned that happiness isn’t gained from material possessions, rather happiness stems from being with those you love, and being kind and loving to everyone around you. I also learned that we must be grateful for everything we have, no matter how small or insignificant it seems.

I plan on taking the experiences and lessons learned on this trip to heart, and I am truly grateful that I was able to experience the beautiful country of Nepal.
The Impact of The Caste System

Emily Fiala

During the 2018 Spring break, five McKearn Fellows completed a service project in Madi Village, Nepal, through the organization Wine to Water. I had previously never been out of the country, or even on a plane, making this a trip of many “firsts.” The project consisted of a collaborative effort to dig a hole 1.5 meters deep by 1 meter wide, which the team finished early, enabling them to dig a trench around 3 feet deep and 100 meters long for the pipeline as well! Eventually, a water tank will be placed in the hole which will provide 90 homes in the village with clean water, something the villagers currently do not have access to.

The trip was very emotional. We lived in the village with the local families, and experienced and observed their daily lives. Their kindness, graciousness, and work ethic are something truly admirable. They take advantage of every second of the day, whether it be working in the fields, building, cooking, cleaning, tending to animals, or caring for children. For example, every day when we walked up the hill to the work site, I saw two men using a saw to cut wood, and when I would walk back down for lunch they were still working, and even when I would walk back down at the end of the day they were STILL cutting the wood. This was something I observed every single day at the work site, and it was amazing how content and optimistic they seem while completing their task.

I also had the opportunity to interview a Nepali woman about her daily life in the village. Before the interview, I said that it appeared that the Nepali people were so happy and worry free, but this interview really opened my eyes to their hardships and reality. A translator and I worked together to conduct the interview while sitting on the Nepali lady’s porch. She told us how she dropped out of school after the fourth grade, because she’s a member of the lower caste system in Nepal and the teachers are partial to the upper caste, and failed her four times in a row. She began to blame herself, and she became very depressed. She told us how she wakes up every morning in so much physical and emotional pain that she cannot get out of bed, and for this reason, she still lives with her family. She then told us that she believes the source of her pain is a supernatural power that overrides her and inflicts this pain. The translator and I believe she was ill, but she did not understand due to lack of education. She told me that she is so thankful just to be talking to me and that it is a privilege to see me sitting on her porch writing because she knows this is a skill she will never have. She said she was glad I came to visit Nepal because she is poor and would never be able to come visit us in the United States. For me, this interview and the entire trip were impactful experiences, especially because it allowed me to put my life into perspective and made me realize that life for many Nepali people is very difficult, and that I take many things for granted.
Victoria Kwaben

I traveled to Nepal eager to partake in a service trip that would help a community establish clean water. Our goal was to dig a 1.5-meter-deep hole and trench for a tank and pipeline. The majority of my time at the worksite was spent with the Nepalese women in the “trenches.” The “trenches” was a nickname for the narrow, deep trail that would extend to the village homes. In first joining the welcoming women, I watched to see where I could participate in their systematic digging and shoveling. We eventually fell into a pattern in which they would use the hoes to break and loosen the dirt and I’d follow up by shoveling the dirt from the trench. We worked together for three to four consecutive days. Our goal was reached the last day the volunteers would be working on the project. Working in the trenches with the women was a humbling experience that allowed me to reach the connection I yearned to have with them. Even though we were not able to verbally communicate, there were numerous times nonverbal communication went a long way. In time, I learned a few Nepalese words such as one pronounced “Tak-i-o” – the Nepalese way of expressing “tired,” which always created laughter among us. The transcultural actions and mutual goal established a connection between the volunteers and Nepalese community. I was especially inspired and honored to work alongside these women by their strength and endurance. For example, the women worked barefoot in their everyday clothing and without gloves; yet they completed more or the same amount of work as the volunteers. Working with them pushed me to work harder. I learned much from them about digging, their culture and values of life.

Not only did I achieve my initial objective, but I also received the opportunity to use my current healthcare training as a nursing student to help a volunteer in a medical emergency. The volunteer, a woman in her late fifties/early sixties, lost consciousness during severe abdominal pain, fell and hit her head. It was just a coincidence that Aspen Wheeler, a colleague and myself were awake studying at 2 a.m. We encountered her partner in a panic: running down the hotel steps and screaming with wildly swinging arms that he needed an ambulance. He explained to us she had lost consciousness. We jumped into action. After receiving permission to help, we ran to the couple’s room. I’ll admit, I was nervous. I reminded myself to treat step by step. I began with priorities airway, breathing, and circulation. With the aid of Aspen, I took vitals, medication history and completed a focused and general assessment. Aspen and I worked as an effective and efficient team; providing skill, consistent communication, and quick thinking. Following my assessments, I suspected the volunteer was dehydrated by exertion which contributed to additional problems. Astoundingly, the hotel could not reach an ambulance; however, a kind hotel employee offered to drive us to the hospital. The physician confirmed dehydration and the woman received fluids and electrolytes intravenously. The experience allowed me to observe the healthcare in Nepal and learn from the healthcare providers with whom I spoke with in the emergency room. I acted as a first responder which was enjoyable despite initially feeling odd because I am greatly accustomed to the patients coming to me in a hospital.

Overall, my experiences with the women and helping the volunteer taught me to use my resources to the fullest. Furthermore, they demonstrated that teamwork and connection facilitate success. I aspire to implement what I learned about these factors of trust, connection and mutual goals in my everyday practice as a growing health care professional.
Teamwork in Nepal

Taneisha Vilma, McKearn GA

The international service trip to Nepal was a truly exhilarating experience. By partnering with the non-profit organization Wine to Water (W|W) we had a unique opportunity of volunteering and visiting several popular sites. We spent the majority of the trip in a Madi, a small community in the Chitwan District with several homestay families. The community was welcoming from the moment we arrived. Despite our late arrival due to a road closure, we were met with a traditional welcoming ceremony. As we filed out of the bus we exchanged the traditional greeting of ‘Namaste’ with several community members. Each day we took our bus to the worksite, where we worked together with community members. Following our service portion of the trip we journeyed to popular locations. We visited the Shanti Stupa in Pokhara and the renowned Swayambhunath also known as the ‘Monkey Temple’ in Kathmandu.

In addition to experiencing a new culture and adventures, it became evident that a take away message from the trip was the importance of teamwork and communication. Before the service trip began there was collective effort from the honors staff and various resources across NIU’s campus that helped us reach our destination. Additionally, there was extensive interaction with the volunteer coordinators and staff at Wine to Water to ensure that the group had completed all necessary forms and had up to date documentation. Once we arrived at the worksite, it took a collective effort to dig the hole for the holding tank and initial trenches. It became apparent that trading shifts was more efficient while giving everyone time to rest. Traveling as a group presents challenges. Everyone must be accounted for, safe, and aware of plans. Within our group we were able to maintain a successful service trip by working with the Wine to Water ground team, other volunteers, and through continued communication within our group. With all the exciting activities and experiences, we must not overlook how this service trip strengthened skills that we often highlighted during our personal and professional development workshops. This presented an opportunity to implement course discussions into real-world context in ways we may not have readily recognized prior to departure.

“Traveling to Nepal offered a great exercise of the importance of teamwork and working collaboratively to achieve a goal.”

Traveling to Nepal offered a great exercise of the importance of teamwork and working collaboratively to achieve a goal.
Congratulations to Graduating Fellows

**Katie Denius** | B.S. Biological Sciences with minors in Chemistry and Psychology

Following graduation, Katie will be attending the University of Alabama Birmingham School of Optometry. There she will be earning a Doctor of Optometry degree, as well as a Masters in Visual Science. “I am really excited to start this next portion of my academic career that Northern Illinois University has more than adequately prepared me for. I'm really excited to move forward, but will never forget the place that started it all… Thank you all so much for your support throughout the past four years. I truly believe that being an honors student enhanced my experience at NIU in so many ways- and I can never thank you all enough and I will miss you guys.”

**Andrew Waite** | B.S. Management—Human Resource Management with minors in Southeast Asian and Global Studies

Andrew is currently interviewing for consulting jobs and looks forward to beginning his career. In the long-term, he would like to be in a consulting career that allows him to work in the US as well as Southeast Asia. He can see his career growing due to his ability to speak Bahasa Indonesia which will benefit Indonesian and US business relations. He has had a number of experiences as an undergraduate to prepare him for a global career.

**Jayson Shiau** | B.S. Electrical Engineering: Electrical and Computer Engineering with a minor in Computer Science

Jayson has accepted an offer to become an Associate Engineer at Commonwealth Edison (ComEd), an Exelon Company. For the first 6 months starting in June, he will be participating in the New Graduate Rotational Program where he will rotate through 6 different engineering departments and will then select a permanent appointment at the end of the year. Before accepting this position, Jason considered attending Graduate school for his PhD. He was accepted into University of Wisconsin at Madison, Purdue University, and The Ohio State University. After visiting these three schools and taking into consideration the practical nature of an engineering degree, he decided that obtaining industry experience should be his first priority. With this in mind, he will be perusing a Master’s Degree in Electrical Engineering and attend school while still working full-time. He will also be studying for the fundamentals of engineering (FE) exam that will prepare him to become a professional licensed engineer (PE). Eventually, after working in industry Jayson will apply to schools for his PhD. Jayson stated, “I can become a professor, conduct ground-breaking research, and pass on my skills to the next generation of problem-solvers.”

**Zohra Sattar** | B.S. in Chemistry-Biochemistry with minors in Biological Sciences and History

At NIU, Zohra Sattar conducted research into medicinal and natural product chemistry to combat bacterial infections and malaria, microfluidic diagnostic chip design, and the stability of various inorganic compounds. She also synthesized anticancer peptides at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Outside the lab, Zohra planned NIU’s first chemistry research symposium, performed chemistry stage experiments during the annual Chem Demo, and volunteered with the Alpha Chi Sigma chemistry professional fraternity. Zohra will be publishing her work on the efficacy of traditional Kenyan medicinal plants this summer while teaching math and chemistry to incoming college freshmen before attending Northwestern University for a PhD in chemistry and biochemistry.

**Shekinah Bergmann** | M.S. in Engineering and Engineering Technology focused on Industrial and Systems Engineering

Shekinah has been an engaged McKearn Fellow since 2014. She says “Northern Illinois University has been good to me!” and she is now headed to West Monroe Partners where she will be doing business consulting.
Jessica Cox | B.S. Biological Sciences with a minor in Chemistry

Jessica has accepted a position in the Quality Assurance department of Rochester Midland Corporation in Aurora, IL. They make sanitation products for the food industry to ensure food meets government standards. Jessica is thrilled about the opportunity, "I am very excited because the company has amazing ethics and I love that I will be in the final step to make sure the customer receives the quality product they deserve".

Maggie Miller | B.S. Chemistry-Biochemistry and Psychology with minors in Southeast Asian Studies and Studies in Linguistics

Maggie will be taking a gap year to explore different career path options and to discover which graduate program suits her professional goals. She is particularly interested in graduate programs that will allow her to help people the most with her skill set. Maggie is committed to finding a program that allows her to continue exploring natural products and traditional medicines as potential solutions to modern health crises. The ideal next step will likely include a way for Maggie to use her research on holistic medicine in Indonesia along with research from her pending publication on Kenyan natural medicinal products. For her publication, she tested natural product extractions with four types of bacteria, including E. coli.

Wataru Hashimoto | B.S. Applied Physics

Although Wataru is completing his degree in Physics, he has become extremely interested in engineering. After graduation, he will continue his education at NIU in order to pursue a Masters degree in Engineering and Engineering Technology focused on Mechanical Engineering. He will focus on research aimed at innovating the renewable energy field. Following graduate school, he is hoping to obtain an industry position researching and actively making contributions to renewable energy engineering.

Jack Sauter | B.A. Political Science—Politics and Governance with a minor in Spanish

Jack plans to teach English abroad for a year while simultaneously research the best graduate school program to attend. This summer he will be completing a month-long certification at the Chicago International TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) Academy. Currently, he is leaning towards teaching in France. Jack is very interested in neuroscience research and will likely pursue this avenue for graduate studies.
Meet The New Fellows

Cassandra Kamp

Cassandra is double majoring in Psychology and Rehabilitation and Disability Services with a minor in Spanish. She plans to pursue a doctorate in occupational therapy, particularly in a pediatric setting. She chose this path because she wants to work with people in a way that would have a positive impact on their lives. Cassandra is passionate about helping others and a strong advocate for mental health. At NIU, Cassandra joined the Student Association Senate at NIU to advocate for the students and to make an impact on campus. The impact includes funding student organizations, supporting the different culture resource centers, taking a stance for mental health awareness, and representing our students at a local, state, and federal level. During her sophomore year she will be a research assistant in the psychology department, an Honors Fellow, Student Association Senator, and will be the President of Active Minds, a mental health awareness club. Outside of school, she is a swim instructor and lifeguard at a park district. Some of her hobbies include playing the tuba and flute, reading, spending time outdoors, and working with children. As a McKearn Fellow, she would like to use her connections and leadership experience to strengthen the ties between the different communities at NIU.

Mathew McCoy

Matthew is pursuing a double major in Mechanical Engineering and Saxophone Performance: Jazz Studies and is also considering a minor in Applied Mathematics. He is passionate about positively impacting the world through research and development in the engineering field. Matthew also has a passion for jazz performance. NIU has provided him the opportunity to follow both of his passions to their fullest extent. He currently works in the NIU Makerspace where he uses multiple types of additive and subtractive manufacturing technologies such as SLS, FDM and laser cutting methods to create parts for students and faculty. He is in the process of completing research with Todd Durham on the structural integrity of FDM builds when specific and measurable forces are applied. Matthew is very invested in finding ways to recycle and reuse the plastic waste created from these processes as there are no proper disposal solutions currently available to the public. In addition to this, he is heavily involved in the NIU Supermileage Club, Mars Rover Club, and NIU Jazz Ensemble. Upon completing his bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering, he plans to pursue a graduate degree in mechanical engineering, as well as continue to follow his passion for music.

Alexandra Karnuth

Alexandra is pursuing a Nursing major here at NIU. She has strong passion for humanitarian service and is fascinated by the sciences; nursing being a perfect combination of the two. She is an Honors Fellow and a member of Sigma Kappa Sorority, an organization whose focuses are personal growth, friendship, service, and loyalty. Alexandra has Irish danced for over 10 years and continues to be present in the Irish dance world through teaching lessons and hopes to continue to have dance as a part of her life throughout college and beyond. She enjoys working with children and hopes to impact the lives of as many children as possible both through Irish dance and her future work in the medical field. Alexandra is interested in traveling to impoverished countries in order to supply medical aide to those in need during her time as a McKearn Fellow. After graduating, she hopes to work as a pediatric oncology nurse, and later become either a nurse practitioner or a pediatric oncologist.
Kylie Zawisza

Kylie is a Biochemistry major and plans to pursue a minor in Spanish. She is a Presidential Scholar and is involved in the NIU Chemistry Club and Research Rookies. As a Research Rookie, she studied novel protein-ligand interactions and their resulting binding affinities. She plans to continue exploration of this research throughout her education at NIU. Outside of school, she works at an animal shelter and is passionate about animal care and health. After graduating with her bachelor’s degree from NIU, Kylie plans to obtain admittance into veterinary school and eventually establish herself as a small animal veterinarian.

Todd Durham

Todd is a Mechanical Engineering major and is also considering a minor in Applied Mathematics. He is passionate about understanding how objects and mechanisms work so that one day he can modify and/or make them even better. In the engineering department, he works in the NIU Makerspace where he uses 3D printers along with a laser cutter to build parts for students and faculty. He is also conducting a research project with Matt McCoy on the most efficient and effective use of fasteners in PLA 3D printed parts or to create a new method of combining printed parts. Next year, he will be the president of the NIU Mars Rover Team, a member of the national honor society Lambda Sigma, and a volunteer at the Communiversity Gardens. Outside of school, he loves to explore the outdoors, to go on adventures, and to visit new places. After graduating from NIU, he plans to pursue a master’s degree in mechanical engineering or enter the industry, hopefully with a career in additive manufacturing.
Prior to visiting Nepal, I had not given much thought to what riches I would find amongst the people of Nepal. What I noticed was that the people in the village named Raitoke, the place where we dug the hole known as “the pit”, were rich in community. The way this community existed was unlike anything I have experienced before. When we arrived, there was a sign that said “Lets talk about gender equity”, then I learned that all of the women of this village were leading the effort to get clean water. The women seemed to have a great sense of pride about having people travel from America to help with this project in their village. To ensure this project happened, the women of the community setup a rotation dig schedule. Each woman who spent the day digging was still responsible for maintaining her home duties such as cleaning, laundry, and food preparation. Part of the dig rotation was that women who were not working the dig site would maintain the women’s home who did work. This was simply amazing. The sense of community was very strong and everyone came together. We also experienced the generosity of Nepali community when we visited a local home. The woman who lived there was excited to have us and made each of us a cup of milk tea. I later learned that Wine to Water (W|W) would only invest in a community that invested in their own project. The local municipality invests and the community members invest a percentage of the cost by contributing labor, money, or other resources.
Jason Goode

When traveling abroad to complete a service project, I learned that having a ground team is absolutely critical. Wine to Water (W|W) has setup W|W Nepal. The Nepal team provided ground assistance that was critical to the success of the program. The Nepal ground team provided the travel plans and coordinated all the details of our visit from meals to the places that we stayed. This project could not function without them. The ground team consisted of Guneshwar Mahato, Bhumika Adhikari, Avisecc Basnet, Roshani Sapkota, Ram Timilsina, and Kaushal Singh. I enjoyed getting to know the team because they were willing to invite me to experience the Nepali culture. We each shared stories of our different customs and answered each other’s cultural questions. Each member of the ground team translated conversations between myself and the Nepali community members who I worked side-by-side with digging the hole for the water reservoir tank. Guneshwar shared how he delivered lectures at US colleges. It was nice to learn that he has a Ph.D. in Engineering and is the CEO of Nexus Technology in Nepal. Bhumika was newly married so we shared stories of different wedding customs. The W|W Nepal team provided a personalized link to the country and allowed me to develop new friendships across the globe. This trip was coordinated by Lisa Merritt who was our point of contact for arranging the trip. She was a great leader and I am glad she led this service trip. She was very aware of all the volunteers mental and physical state. The trip was so impactful because of the people involved—each of them was vital to our experience.
Jungle Walk & “Monkey Temple”
Post McKearn Work in “The Pit”

Water Reservoir Tank
Working to Get Filtered Water To Each Home