

## Gloucester man returns to work at Honduran orphanage

By Gail McCarthy, Staff Writer | Posted: Monday, February 2, 2015 9:27 am

Almost 10 years ago, Carson Stevens of Gloucester went with his eighth-grade Spanish class on a service trip to an orphanage in Honduras.

That trip, organized by Glen Urquhart School of Beverly, was led by Dr. Brian Orr, a local pediatrician, and Barbara Kelley, a popular Cape Ann Spanish teacher. They both serve on the regional board of a nonprofit called Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos USA — Spanish for “Our Little Brothers and Sisters”.

“I met people then who I am still in contact with,” says Stevens, now 24. “I always wanted to go back.”

Now, he is realizing his dream after being hired to work at the orphanage he visited.

Stevens recently completed a Master in Business Administration degree from Clark University after earning a bachelor’s degree in history at Clark as well. Instead of staying in the United States after graduation, he opted to spend a year working at the orphanage, taking his commitment to community service to the global level.

“It was a perfect time to go,” said Stevens, who resides at the Rancho Sante Fe orphanage, home to more than 400 children.

Looking back over the opportunities and good fortune he has had, Stevens said he wanted to be part of a greater effort to help others in need. In his first six months on the job, he worked as a computer teacher; next, he will work as an English teacher to middle schoolers.

“What makes it unique is that our day job is only part of the experience,” he said, explaining that his service includes spending time with a group of children who live in a particular dorm.

“In the beginning, we explored all the dorms and made a ranking and I found the dorm with children with special needs was my first choice,” he said. “There are about seven children, instead



Courtesy photo

**Gloucester resident Carson Stevens at the orphanage where he is working in Honduras.**

of others with 15, so there is more interaction and attention given to each child. I expected to connect best with the older children but I connected best with this group.”

Their needs range from those who are developmentally delayed to autistic, and in many ways he is like the older brother.

Stevens also likes the challenge of conversing in Spanish.

He easily spoke in Spanish as well as English during the interview for this story at his family’s West Gloucester home. He spent Christmas at the orphanage, then returned to Cape Ann for a few weeks to visit his family.

Positive experience

He said he would recommend this type of experience to others with such an interest in service.

“It’s a good experience to help others. It’s also good to learn another language and learn about another culture,” said Stevens. “I receive more in service to others than what I give —that saying is true. I am learning more about myself than I expected.”

His mother, Anna Stevens, visited the orphanage in Honduras with the school trip a decade ago and will make a subsequent trip this spring.

“It’s a great organization and so positive. We were all inspired,” she said. “I’m really thrilled for (Carson). He’s been dreaming of this for 10 years.”

Carson Stevens has taken great interest in nonprofit community organizations whether learning about it in a classroom or volunteering his time to take part in community service efforts. During college, he volunteered at the Boys & Girls Club in Worcester, where he served as a “big brother” for a few years. Then he took a big step in going abroad in his postgraduate years.

‘All hands on deck’

Dr. Orr, who noted there is a growing number of supporters in the Cape Ann and North Shore areas, said he saw Stevens around Christmas time when he traveled to the orphanage on one of his many trips there.

“They just had a foster care system close in Honduras and this orphanage had to take in 117 kids, including many babies,” Orr said. “So it’s now all hands on deck to help feed these babies and they are doing an incredible job with everybody pitching in. It’s truly like a big family and they treat these kids like they’re part of the family now. This is an impressive system of orphanages.”

Orr said the North Shore connection began a decade ago and the connections continue. Orr will be taking six Boston College students to one of the NPH orphanages in the Dominican Republic in February.

One BC graduate is currently at the orphanage in Honduras, and there is another in Nicaragua, said Orr. In March, another group from Glen Urquhart School will go to an orphanage in the Dominican Republic as part of its ongoing service efforts.

The nonprofit Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos was founded in 1954.

More than 18,300 children have been nurtured by the organization which now operates in nine countries — Honduras, Mexico, Haiti, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Peru and Bolivia.

Today, more than 3,300 children are being cared for in a supportive environment. For more information, visit: [www.nph.org](http://www.nph.org).

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