

Jamie Ogles, B.A. English, Literature, 2010

By Sarah K. Miller

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Jamie Ogles is from Scottsville, Kentucky. She graduated from WKU in 2010 with a major in literature and a minor in creative writing. She benefitted greatly from her coursework here, saying, “my ability to write, edit, and think critically has helped more than anything. That seems to be the general answer, but English garnished my ability to accept different ways of thinking--particularly problem-solving.” She went on to discuss how being an English major can help more than just literary and writing skills by providing an open mind. “The open mind of an English major is, of course, molded by the instructors and department, but it's molded to not fit into pre-determined ways of thinking, and that is such an asset in an ever-changing job climate. Employers like those who can think on their feet, prioritize (rather than multi-task), and work comfortably alone or with a group. I can't think of a better degree that nurtures those assets.”

After graduating, Ogles obtained an internship with an international outreach group, where she was able to do program development in inner-city Indianapolis. She was also able to spend a month in Belgium with inner-city kids doing things such as teaching baseball and nurturing them with self-esteem training. She returned home from Belgium for five weeks before her next traveling adventure. “I began my [Peace Corps](#) service in the Kingdom of Tonga (South Pacific) as an education and gender and development volunteer. From this, I learned I didn't necessarily want to teach but that working with non-profits to further the advocacy and action of social issues was my passion.”



During her time in Tonga, she taught primary school children English, physical education, and music. She said her biggest cultural issues was timing. “Tongans, though wonderful and friendly people, aren't ever on time. My island was mountainous with terrible roads and little transportation. Because of these factors, my principal and counterpart teacher were either late or didn't show up on a VERY consistent

basis.” When these problems arose, Ogles said she would be in charge of over 40 children, ranging from five to twelve years old. “In the mornings, while waiting for my teachers to show up, the entire school would gather into one room and we would simply sing. I would write lyrics on the board, we'd have vocabulary lessons, and sing. It gave a great structure in those moments of ‘uhh...what do I do now?’ I will say--they hated Weezer.”

Ogles has recently been the community outreach coordinator/AmeriCorps member at [New Albany/Floyd County Habitat for Humanity](#). Since her service completion in August 2015, she has been hired as the program manager. Her interest in non-profits was benefitted from her English degree as well. “Nonprofits are always needing people who can critically think and think outside the box,” Ogles explained. Her open mind and ability to communicate effectively were assets she could promote when applying for this kind of position. “Marketing and social media is huge right now with nonprofits--they are constantly needing people who can actively engage future volunteers and/or donors by social media activity. If you have strong writing skills--especially if they can translate between creative and professional, you're set to go.”

Her advice to current students was to become more active. “Be active in the department--that's my one regret,” Ogles wrote. “I could have explored so many other options if I would've joined clubs and gone to more discussions, conferences, etc. If you don't want to teach or climb the shaky ladder of becoming a professor, English students are always welcomed into med school, non-profits, etc. Right now, the millennial generation will have a rough time finding job placement right out of undergrad—especially if you're in the liberal arts. However, we seem to be the most well-rounded people out there, so if you can just get your foot in the door somewhere and network for self-marketing, you'll be fine.”

