

Christian Deitch, Peace Corps Volunteer, Kyrgyz Republic* (2000–2001)

Biography

My name is Christian Deitch and I'm 22 years old. I was born and raised in Matteson, Illinois, a town about 30 miles



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south of Chicago. I have two siblings: an older brother, Matt, and a younger sister, Allison. Both my parents are 7th- and 8th-grade teachers. I graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign last year, and have lived in the Kyrgyz Republic since June 2000.

I am a TEFL Volunteer (*Teaching of English as a Foreign Language*) at Chingiz Aitmatov School. The middle students I teach are diverse: Kyrgyz, Russian, Kazak, Uzbek, Turkish, Kurdish, and Azerbaijani. I teach 12- to 17-year-old students 18 hours a week in a classroom setting, and I also have a series of English clubs for my most enthusiastic students for an additional 15 hours each week.

I live in a village of about 5,000 people in the far northwest corner of the Kyrgyz Republic, on the border with Kazakhstan. The Kyrgyz Republic was once a part of the Soviet Union, and my village, Amanbaev, was the site of a large *kal-hoz*, or collective farm. Because the Soviet government needed many different people to work on the collective farms, my village is diverse, reflecting the numerous nationalities that lived throughout the Soviet Union.

Besides teaching, TEFL Volunteers can spend their spare time working on

secondary projects. I am working on several secondary projects right now. One of them currently entails organizing recordings of Kyrgyz folk music and putting them online in a Kyrgyz music webpage. When it goes online this winter, anyone anywhere on Earth will be able to download and listen to MP3s of Kyrgyz folk music. Additionally, I am putting together a series of lesson plans called the Talas Democracy Project. It's a tutorial in American history and democracy for high-level students. I'll be finishing that up this month. Together with the other Volunteers in Talas Oblast—my province—we will teach our students about the finer points of American history and government.

*Christian served in his community until the Peace Corps program was suspended in October 2001. Volunteers began to re-enter the Kyrgyz Republic in March 2002.



Christian (rear) with his 8A English class. With the Kyrgyz Republic a multi-ethnic nation, there were five Kyrgyz students, two Russians, and one Azerbaijani in his class.