

Kelli Haynes Oral History Interview
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection
Administrative Information

Creator: Kelli Haynes
Interviewer: Sally Waley
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Biographical Note

Kelli Haynes served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Botswana from April 2010 to June 2012 on a health project.

Access

Open.

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Oral History Interview

with

Kelli Haynes

May 5, 2019
Austin, Texas

By Sally Waley

Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection
John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum

WALEY: [00:00:00] May 5th, 2019. This is Sally Waley, I'm interviewing Kelli Haynes, who was a Peace Corps volunteer in Botswana.

HAYNES: [00:00:13] Yes.

WALEY: From?

HAYNES: From April 2010 to June of 2012.

WALEY: [00:00:20] Ok, and what project or sector did you work in?

HAYNES: [00:00:24] I was a health volunteer.

WALEY: [00:00:26] Great. So Kelli, to start off with, why did you join the Peace Corps?

HAYNES: [00:00:35] I had this moment, my freshman year of college, where I just desperately needed to decide that day what I was going to do for the rest of my life. And it was actually Super Bowl Sunday. And I didn't know that because I don't care about sports. So I was just online like Googling nonspecific job opportunities. And I had just dropped my second major, which was social work, because I didn't think I thought it would be too heartbreaking. So I knew I wanted to help people and I knew I wanted to live somewhere that was not the U.S. for at least some time in my life.

HAYNES: [00:01:20] So I Googled something like jobs, helping people, other countries. And that took me to the Peace Corps website. And I spent maybe four or five minutes on the website. I never knew any returned volunteers. I didn't know a lot about the Peace Corps. And I was like, that's what I'm doing. And I called my mom during the Super Bowl. My parents are sports fans, so they were watching the football game. And I said, I'm going to join the Peace Corps when I graduate from college. And she said something like, that's, no, that's too far away. Don't do that. And then she said, actually, can we talk about this later, after the game? And I was like, oh, is there a football game today? And she's like, it's the Super Bowl. And I was like, oh yeah, no. We've got a couple of years to talk about it. Just thought I'd give you a heads up. And then I just kind of stuck with it and applied and joined the Peace Corps.

WALEY: [00:02:16] How long did it take you from? Did you apply right then?

HAYNES: [00:02:20] No, I applied after my junior year. It was from the time that I hit apply on the application on the website until I got on a plane, it was a year and nine months. That was back when the applications took a little longer and you couldn't, like, apply to a specific country or job.

WALEY: [00:02:45] What year was that?

HAYNES: [00:02:47] That was, I left in 2010.

WALEY: [00:02:50] Yeah. And what college did you graduate from?

HAYNES: [00:02:54] I went to Abilene Christian University. Mostly I just wanted to buy myself time after college to figure out what I was going to do with my life. And it worked, I figured it out.

WALEY: [00:03:11] What was your upbringing like? Did you see things in your life before Peace Corps that shaped that decision or that shaped your shaped your service? Did you travel much?

HAYNES: [00:03:25] I had never traveled. When I was in college in preparation for joining the Peace Corps, I did like a lot of work to kind of pad my resume, to make them want me more. I studied abroad in England and in Ireland. That was the first time I left the country. So growing up, I grew up in East Texas, in a city called Tyler, Texas, and, I had a really cool family and it was really nice, but I always wanted to live in another country. I was just always really interested in that. And even as a kid, I would always tell my parents that I was emigrating. I was just going to go somewhere else. And especially in the winter, it was east Texas. The winters were not bad. I just have a low tolerance for it. I would say I'm moving to the equator. And actually I did Peace Corps Response too, and I impulse applied to a Peace Corps Response one cold February day. I'm moving to the equator! And then I did move to the equator. Yeah, I just always wanted to do, I always wanted to live in another country and the career path I'd been on. Well, as an adult and also all the things that interested me as a kid, were like helping professions, so it was inevitable.

WALEY: [00:05:01] Did you know where you were going when you applied or when you were three months before you left even?

HAYNES: [00:05:11] Ok, so I applied. At that time, you could tell them like three parts of the world that you wanted to, like that were your preference, your top three, but you couldn't give them like a country or anything.

WALEY: [00:05:26] So do you remember what your top three were?

HAYNES: [00:05:29] I do. I said South and Central America, the Caribbean or the South Pacific. And I went to none of those places. My recruiter told me in my interview that I was not fluent in Spanish, so it was unlikely that I would

go to anywhere in Central and South America because there are so many people who already speak Spanish who get in there. And then he said there are just very few volunteers in the islands at all. He's like, you're probably going to Africa because that's where most of our volunteers are. And I said, listen, send me wherever you need me, but no place cold. I really can't deal with the cold. And he was like, I mean, I'll see what I can do. And then, yeah, I got my invitation in I want to say January or February. And I left in April.

HAYNES: [00:06:30] And they called me. I had actually I had given up hope that I would ever hear back and I was just applying for permanent jobs in my college town. And I had finally gotten an interview at a place that would be okay and I scheduled the interview Thursday afternoon and then Friday afternoon at like 4:45, someone from Peace Corps called and they said, we're sending your invitation. I can't tell you where or what, but I can tell you it is either Eastern Europe, Central Asia or Africa, which is just all the places that I did not say that I wanted to go. And I was just I was like, OK. So first I called the place that I had an interview for at five o'clock and left a message and I said, I won't be coming to the interview on Monday morning. My situation has changed. If you have any questions, you can call me back. And then I got on YouTube and I started just looking for videos of volunteers in Central Asia and Eastern Europe. And they were all just walking around in blizzards.

HAYNES: [00:07:43] And I still distinctly remember this one video. And they were like, it's a beautiful day, we decided to have a picnic. But it was snowing so hard! It was loud and I had never lived anywhere where there's snow at all, so loud snow was really blowing my mind. And they were trying to like have foot races, but they kept just sinking down into the snow. It was terrible, and I was like, I can do, I can do it. And then I think it was the following Thursday or Friday, I got my invitation and it was for Botswana and I ran to look up to one on a map. And I was like, oh thank goodness, it's in Africa. I think it'll be warm. And it was, mostly. There was like eight weeks of winter and there was no snow. I'll put it that way.

WALEY: [00:08:38] I mean, it sounds like there was some ambiguity in the application process. How did you find your recruiter and did they help with the process along the way?

HAYNES: [00:08:51] Yeah, after I applied. He contacted me and started sending me emails and letting me know what was next in the process, and at the time you still had to mail everything in and get it back by mail. It's a lot more streamlined now. But, yeah, he contacted me and we did my interview in his office. He was in Dallas and I was in Abilene, so I had to drive like three hours to Dallas and I stayed with my brother the night before the interview. And the office was in this big government building in downtown Dallas and I was like 21 at the time. And my brother offered just to take the day off and drive me to the interview. He was like, I don't want you to have to drive in downtown Dallas, having never lived here, and then going into an interview. I'll just drive you. And he did. It was very sweet. And then he took me to breakfast after because I was too nervous to eat. Yeah. But I hear they do interviews like over the phone now. Which sounds really nice.

WALEY: [00:10:08] What kind of questions did the interviewer ask you?

HAYNES: [00:10:12] The interviewer asked. It was mostly just have you considered all of these things, have you considered living really far away from your family? And what are you going to do when, uh, you don't know many people and all that? Yeah, just wanted to make sure that I really thought it through. And I answered that, like, you answer any of your questions for your first job out of college. I just told him yes to everything. Yeah, no, totally, it'll be fine. And, and then he asked me about my relationship status and if I needed a relationship worksheet and I was super single, so it was fine. Yeah, he just wanted to know if I had considered everything. And I definitely thought that I had. So I told him, yeah, totally, I know everything.

WALEY: [00:11:14] And how long was it from your interview to when you got your invitation?

HAYNES: [00:11:21] It was, I want to say, like a little more than a year, yeah.

WALEY: It's a long time.

HAYNES: Yeah, I got, oh, I got something else before that though. Oh, my nomination came like maybe a month later. Which did not include a country or a job.

WALEY: [00:11:47] Right.

HAYNES: [00:11:51] So, there was that. I was preparing for most of my college career since I knew I wanted to do the Peace Corps, for a good job in the Peace Corps. I looked through all the Peace Corps jobs. And community development sounded really interesting to me, so I took a couple of jobs in community development and neighborhood relations and I minored in community development for a second and then dropped it. Um, but then I ended up being nominated to education, which I didn't have experience in, and then ended up being a health volunteer in a school. So I was a guidance and counseling teacher, which in Botswana, guidance and counseling is a subject in school.

HAYNES: [00:13:03] It's really cool. You don't get any grades or have any homework. You just have an adult you can talk to you about stuff, and you talk about things you need to know for life, like a life skills class. And that also included sex ed, which is why it fell under health, because everyone in Botswana, all the Peace Corps volunteers in Botswana, I think from the early 2000s, were health volunteers. We'd been there since they got their independence and then in the late '90s, they were doing really well. They have a really strong economy. They're really proud of their not being corrupt. And they're like, you know what, use your resources other places, we're doing fine. But the HIV pandemic hit really hard in Botswana and so they invited us back. And everyone was just health sector and in different working in different capacities, but all in health. When I was there, it was somewhere around 25 percent of the population, one in four, had HIV. When I checked most recently, it was down to like 21 to 23, I think.

WALEY: [00:14:26] One in 22 or 23?

HAYNES: [00:14:28] No, no. 22 or 23 percent. Yeah.

WALEY: [00:14:31] So that's closer to one in five.

HAYNES: [00:14:34] Yeah, yeah. They're working so hard and I'm just really proud of all the work that they're doing.

WALEY: [00:14:43] When you got your assignment, did you have any idea what was your title and did you have any idea what it meant, how that was going to actually apply to your life for the next two years?

HAYNES: [00:14:52] Yes. No, I didn't. My title was Life Skills Curriculum Rollout Volunteer. Which didn't mean anything to me at the time. They had developed a life skills curriculum for all ages in school. And it was all kinds of life skills, but it was largely focused on HIV prevention and they were doing a rollout trial in the part of the country near the capital. So my sector was, oh, what was it? Oh, life skills, we were life skills volunteers and we were all just in the same part of the country, whereas people in other sectors were all over the country. And our job was to teach teachers how to teach, like teach teachers how to integrate the life skills curriculum into their own. Both of my counterparts ended up being just incredibly educated and really experienced teachers. They both had higher degrees in education and close to 20 years experience teaching. And I had no experience teaching. So I thought my time could be better used in other areas. So I took some classes, or taught some classes, and then I had an after school club called PACT, Peer Approach to Counseling for Teens. And that was probably my favorite project that I did.

HAYNES: [00:16:57] We had a question box set up at the front desk of the school and it was anonymous, you could put whatever question you had in there and we would pull them out in our after-school club. We met on Mondays and Wednesdays and we would talk about the answers to those questions and the kids would pull it out. And it would be like, talk about teen dating relationships or talk about how to have confidence and still be in middle school at the same time. And they would just have their own discussion about it, and if any of the facts got a little skewed, like about how safe sex works or how HIV works, I would kind of guide the conversation. But

mostly they were just doing it on their own. And Monday we would have the conversations and we would pick a good question and then Wednesday someone would volunteer to speak at the Friday assembly about it, and we would spend that day going over what they should include in their speech.

HAYNES: [00:18:00] And then Friday morning, we had an all school assembly every week. And everyone in the school showed up and they stood in lines and we sang some songs and the principal addressed everyone. And then one of my PACT kids would get up and answer a question. And it was really, it was really incredible watching those kids speak. It was my favorite thing. There was one, if I know you're not supposed to have favorites, but one of my favorite students, Solafela, she stood up. She was so scared of public speaking and she volunteered all the time and she volunteered the week we talked about confidence. And she got up and gave this whole speech about how to be confident and she said, do you think someone could stand up in front of all of you if they didn't have confidence?

HAYNES: [00:19:00] And the thing is, she commanded a room. Kids would just look at her and lean forward and be completely intrigued by everything that she said. And she would ask a question and they would just nod along like she was talking to them personally. And it was incredible to watch. And then she gave that speech and she came off and came over and talked to me after the assembly and she said, hey, I need to talk to you just as a guidance counselor. And I was like, yeah, what's going on? And she said, kids are making fun of me, what do I do? I was like, Solafela, you are so brave and you are so strong. And you just gave a whole speech about having confidence and not caring what people think. Take your own advice, rise above. And she's like, I don't know, I guess. I'm like, you're so strong and amazing. I don't know why you don't see this. But they were very wonderful, wonderful kids.

WALEY: [00:20:02] Can we go back to when you first got into the Peace Corps, how did arrive in Botswana? Were you with a big group of people? What language did you speak? How was your training?

HAYNES: [00:20:13] Oh, gosh. Yeah. So there were, I want to say 57 of us and we all went to a staging. We all met together in Philadelphia for two days where we just did some getting-to-know-you type things and all had our last dinner in the U.S. I think we got some cheese steaks or something. And then we all flew together, well, we drove on a bus from Philadelphia to JFK Airport like three o'clock in the morning. And our flight wasn't until the afternoon. They just really wanted to make sure that we got there on time and we couldn't even check in for a couple of hours or we're just like hanging out. And then we took I want to say it's like a 14-and-a-half-hour flight from New York to Johannesburg, South Africa. And then we had to wait over there for like five hours to take a one-hour flight to Botswana. And then we got there and we stayed. They let us stay in a lodge the first night there because we got in late and don't want to bother our host families. But it was really nice. And we were just like finally arrived and our dreams were coming true. And all of us had been in this process for so long and we were finally there. It was beautiful.

HAYNES: [00:21:47] And then we had a match ceremony with our host families. And that, I think, was the moment that it really hit me. I hadn't really actually taken the time to think about what it would be like living in a new culture until that day. And we had the ceremony and when we walked in it, it was kind of like a school gym, I think, is where we were. And we walked in and all the host families were there and they were all cheering, but I didn't know that cheering is cultural. In different cultures cheering sounded like different things and that for some reason was just so weird to me and I felt so displaced because in Botswana, when they cheer, they do something called the ululating.

WALEY: [00:22:48] Can you demonstrate?

HAYNES: [00:22:56] O-o-o! It's a lot of tongue wagging. You stick your tongue out of your mouth and go back and forth and make a loud noise. That's what the women do. And the men do this like low grunting. O-o-o. And then when they're really excited, women will get up and dance and they kind of come over and dance around you. And it's really fun and it's really cool. And it was my favorite thing for the years that I lived there. But the abrupt introduction to that when I was feeling culture shock for the very first time

and just realizing I had left the country was, it was a lot. And I was like, I don't know what to do.

WALEY: [00:23:38] Was this in the morning after you arrived?

HAYNES: [00:23:40] No, this is a few days later. We had a couple of days just to wake up to adjust to that.

WALEY: Yeah, acclimate.

HAYNES: [00:23:51] Yeah, I think it was in the evening and I got matched with my family and my host mom was young. She was maybe like nine or 10 years older than I was at the time. She was in her early thirties and she had three kids who were such sweethearts. And she was really nice. And my host dad was really nice. And they're a great family. And I think it was just my host mom who came to the ceremony and she was so sweet. And the thing I really love about Botswana, one, is that they're a very affectionate culture and I'm a really affectionate person. So she grabbed my hand and walked me back to my seat and sat down like put her hands on my legs. And she was just talking to me and then leaning over me to talk to her friends. And it was just really casual and easy. And she told me what my Setswana name was, which that whole day I had to keep asking her what my name was. It was Tumisang, which means to proclaim.

WALEY: [00:24:57] How did you get that name?

HAYNES: [00:24:59] She picked it before she met me. Yeah, they just told them to pick a name for their volunteer, like before they were introduced.

WALEY: [00:25:07] What language was she speaking to you?

HAYNES: [00:25:11] English. Their official language is English. So everybody knows English. And that's like the business language of, everybody learned English in school. And as a teacher, I was required to teach in English. But their national language is Setswana. So that's everybody's first language and that's how everybody talks to their family and their friends and like

when they're out in public. But usually when they saw me, they would switch to English because they just assume. I mean, they were right.

WALEY: [00:25:41] Did you learn any Setswana?

HAYNES: [00:25:43] I tried. I learned a little bit of Setswana. I can make small talk and Setswana and ask for directions and order lunch and tell the classroom to be quiet and pay attention. But I had English as such a crutch that I didn't learn it very well.

WALEY: [00:26:04] Did Peace Corps teach you any Setswana or was it all?

HAYNES: [00:26:07] Yes, they taught us so much Setswana. Our trainings, so to go back to how we arrived. So usually Peace Corps training is three months, but ours was only two months, and we had four hours of Setswana classes in the morning. Sometimes six, usually four. And then four hours in the afternoon of HIV education and sometimes more specific to what field we were in. Like I was in high school, so they were teaching us life skills stuff. But, yeah, it's a Bantu language, which I didn't know that was even a kind of language. I feel like, I don't know, French or Spanish or whatever, I have at least heard some of those words before. But with Setswana, I had never heard anyone speak, so I didn't know it was a language, I didn't know was a language class, which is embarrassing. So, so many people speak Bantu languages in the world. But yeah, it's not. Like in the scope of languages, it's not a terribly difficult language to learn. But because they had absolutely no context and I don't know any other languages, I don't know about like how to learn languages. I did a terrible job with it.

WALEY: [00:27:38] Is the alphabet the same?

HAYNES: [00:27:41] Yeah. Um, there's some different noises that we don't have, which took me a long time. There's one that's kind of guttural, like a grr, which I didn't learn until I got a cold and I was like, this helps. But there's the TL noise. And that took me, there's a TL and a THL and I would say it with some just some kids in my neighborhood. Kids are really wonderful language teachers, and they'd be like, tl, thl, and they sound the same.

And they're like, they're different. And I'm like, they sound the same! And they'd be like, no, listen. And I'm like, no, that sounds the same.

WALEY: [00:28:27] A slight variation on click.

HAYNES: [00:28:29] Yeah.

WALEY: [00:28:31] So what you said there were 57 people in your group. Were there different sectors that was it broken into, two or three or how many different sectors was the group broken into?

HAYNES: [00:28:41] There were four. So let's see if I can remember them. This is a funny thing, there was a community outreach one, which was what I was prepared for, and they were at like clinics and they were doing social work with nurses and social workers. And then there was the DAC office, what did that stand for? District AIDS Council, I think. So they were like in a government position and they worked with like funding HIV and AIDS projects. And then the fourth one was NGO. They worked with nonprofits.

WALEY: [00:29:24] But it was all under the health sector?

HAYNES: [00:29:26] They were all health volunteers because like I said, Botswana is doing really well as a country, but they just need a lot of help with AIDS.

WALEY: [00:29:35] The AIDS crisis. And what did you learn in your technical training? You spent the morning in language and then you spent the afternoon in technical training. What was that like?

HAYNES: [00:29:47] We just learned about HIV. I hadn't had any experience with HIV. And they asked me to get some volunteer experience with HIV and I went and volunteered at an AIDS resource center. But that was like packing up condom packets to hand out and then like volunteering in the food pantry. So I didn't actually learn a lot about the.

WALEY: [00:30:11] Interacting with patients or the community?

HAYNES: [00:30:14] Or learn anything about HIV. So it was a lot learning about the disease, learning about how it spread, learning to teach people how to keep themselves safe. And then we also just learned a lot about the culture and how to talk about a taboo topic in a culture. They didn't have words in Setswana for a lot of the sex things that we were talking about, they only spoke about them in English. Like I think they did not say sex at all, they said sharing blankets. And they didn't have a word for condom, they just use the word for sock. So a lot of what we did was just getting people comfortable talking about it, because that's what you have to do with HIV education, is that you first have to be comfortable talking about HIV. And I have worked in HIV education since in the U.S. and my Response tour was in Guyana, and that is true everywhere, that it's just really hard to get people to talk. And a lot of your job in HIV education is getting people comfortable with talking about it before you can have genuine conversations about it. I was really lucky. I had teenagers, so they were young and open-minded and I would ask them what adults they could talk to. And they said, we cannot talk to adults about this. It's not OK.

WALEY: [00:31:57] And your training helped you handle those situations, know what to do in those situations?

HAYNES: [00:32:04] Yeah, they taught us some, well, my training was for education. So they taught us like ways to teach this to kids and like games that you can play. And even with adults that I mean. People like fun, interactive education, so we learned like games to play, to make people comfortable touching condoms and talking about condoms and then just doing condom demonstrations and how to, like, use that.

WALEY: [00:32:38] Can you give an example of one of the games or interaction that you played?

HAYNES: [00:32:45] I think one was like blowing up a condom as big as it would go. I think one was like getting as many objects into a condom as you could. And then there was one, oh, this one I really like. That was a line up. And I use this since like in the U.S., where you just print out each step of using a condom on a different sheet of paper and then have everyone hold one

step and then they're not allowed to speak, but they have to put themselves in order of how it goes. And it's like get consent. I have opened the condom. All these different things until they're in order and they all have to switch and not talk to each other.

WALEY: [00:33:26] Who taught your training?

HAYNES: [00:33:29] So we had language teachers who were. They're really fun. I feel like, if you think about pre-service training like summer camp, which is a really easy parallel, I feel like the language teachers are like the cool counselors.

WALEY: Were they local?

HAYNES: [00:33:56] Yeah, they were local. Um, they were are a lot of fun. And they did this all the time and yeah, they're really easy to get along with. And the technical training was taught by either currently serving Peace Corps volunteers would come in every once in a while and teach a session on things that they found work really well. And I did that in my later years, too. And sometimes there were staff members, sometimes they had outside professionals come in and teach us things. They had a former minister of health come in. Her name was Sheila Tlou, and she was, I think, my favorite speaker ever. And she just gave us some context on, like the history of Botswana. She had been the minister of health, so she knew some things about it. But, yeah, all kinds of people came in and taught.

WALEY: [00:34:56] Did you how long had Peace Corps been in that country, was that training fairly well developed by the time you got there?

HAYNES: [00:35:02] Yeah, they had been there since '63 when Botswana got their independence from England. I think they left in '97 and then started again in 2003, maybe. Don't quote me on that. So, yeah, they've been around for a minute.

WALEY: [00:35:26] Was your staff, the Peace Corps staff, were they familiar with the country, were they experienced or new? Or good? Did they interact with the volunteers at all?

HAYNES: [00:35:37] No, they're really good. They're mixture of Americans and host country nationals. And the Americans were returned Peace Corps volunteers themselves, so they got it. They understood all the. They were just really good. They were really good at calming us down. I feel like because they can go a lot of pre-service training. This is I really love the whole pre-service training model because you're together for two months and you're living in a host family's house, but you also see other people in your same situation every single day. So we would come in and sometimes we would just be like, I feel like we are such a pain to work with because we are all just adjusting to a new culture and we didn't have control over anything. So we are just like kind of a pain about other things, like, my language class didn't get tea and donuts today! And they just had to put up with that. But they did a really great job. They were like, yeah, it seems like everybody is a little stressed, so why don't we talk about that? How are you feeling? And I really appreciated that. And they had a lot of like safety and security rules to keep us safe and to make sure that they could let us know if anything was going on where we were. And we were just like kind of annoyed with those rules, even though they were being really great to us. So I yeah, big props to them for putting up with our nonsense.

WALEY: [00:37:18] Was your training near the capital? I assume the Peace Corps staff was in the capital.

HAYNES: [00:37:25] Yeah, the Peace Corps staff is in the capital, Gaborone. And then our training was in a village Molepolole, which is one of the maybe the biggest village, which is, I want to say, like an hour from the capital. I think the staff commuted in, which is brutal, but. Yeah, that's where our training was, and then I was placed in a village called Thamaga, which was like halfway between Molepolole and Gaborone. So I just kind of stayed on this one little, lived in this one little region. But I got to travel all over the country and it's a beautiful country.

WALEY: [00:38:17] I would love to hear more about the country. Did you travel during training at all, or were you just kind of seeing that one area?

HAYNES: [00:38:27] So our training was really cool in that we got to, I think maybe the third week, fourth week of training, we get to spend a whole week shadowing another volunteer. So they just sent us to a currently serving volunteer's house. And we stayed in their house and we ate all our meals with them and we went to work with them and we just saw what life was like as a volunteer. And that was really great because I had no idea what to expect at all. And even if you just ask any currently serving volunteer what to expect, they'll all tell you, don't have expectations. It's all so different. And it's, I mean, it's in all places all over the world. So it's all going to be really different and even village to village and job to job. So that was one place that I got to travel. And that was also just like 45 minutes from our training site. And then our sixth or seventh week, we got to go to our actual site that we would be at for the next two years and just like go see our job, meet our coworkers, stay in our house.

WALEY: How big is Botswana?

HAYNES: It's about the size of Texas.

WALEY: [00:40:02] And so everybody traveled out from the training village. That must have taken a long time for some people to get to their site.

HAYNES: [00:40:11] Yeah, for me, it was like 30 minutes, wasn't long at all.

WALEY: [00:40:15] What was the name of your village?

HAYNES: [00:40:18] Thamaga. Yeah, but some people had to, like, stay overnight somewhere because there's not roads everywhere. Some people were going all the way to the opposite side of the country. And so they have like less days of actual shadowing just because it took them so long to get that back. For me, it was like I got there before work started.

WALEY: [00:40:46] How did you feel when you got your assignment and realized it was so close to where you'd been doing your training?

HAYNES: [00:40:53] I was actually really excited because we had driven through that village on our way to visit like a historical site or something like that,

and it is such a beautiful place. Like, where we were staying, a large majority of the country is in the Kalahari Desert, so it's mostly just flat. But my village had all these beautiful rock formations and we had stopped in at that village because they had a famous pottery shop, Botsewelo Pottery. And we like stopped in and some people got some pottery and we like walked around like, oh it's cool. And then I found out that my house was actually on the compound of that pottery shop, so I actually visited basically my front yard before I left. It was just like, it was still pretty big. It was like twenty thousand people. It's a really beautiful geographically, just like kind of a sleepy little village. I really liked it. I'm not going to say at first, I wasn't a little disappointed that I wasn't like all the way up north in that river delta where it's gorgeous and there's like elephants in your backyard. But I did really love my assignment.

WALEY: [00:42:29] So what was your what was your host family like?

HAYNES: [00:42:33] My host family was really sweet. I had a 14 year old little brother named Poncho and an eight year old little sister, Mompon. And I think she like one or two year old little sister named Mickey. And they are great. My little brother was like, he was just so sweet and just such a good kid. And he cooked dinner for us every night. And I walked in one night and he was like, I asked what he was making for dinner. And he said, I'm making liver. And I was like, oh, good. And they had hosted volunteers for years. And he's like, it's okay, I know Americans don't like liver, I'm cooking you something else. And I was like, Poncho, you're my hero. And I was like, what are you making me? And he said, intestines. And I was like, okay, well thanks buddy.

WALEY: Get over it.

HAYNES: Yeah.

WALEY: [00:43:42] What was your living situation like?

HAYNES: [00:43:45] So we were supposed to have, like in our home stay families, we were supposed to have our own room and that was a stipulation. So all five of them slept in one room. And then I had my own room. They all slept

in one room in the same bed. And I can't imagine, like trying to sleep with that many people, but they did it every night and they seemed fine with it. We had one bathroom, we had running water and electricity.

WALEY: [00:44:21] Was your house made out of, what was your house made out of?

HAYNES: [00:44:24] Cinder block and a tin roof, my home stay family. My house, my actual house that I lived in was so, so much nicer than I was expecting.

WALEY: [00:44:38] So your home stay family?

HAYNES: [00:44:41] Was just during training.

WALEY: [00:44:42] Just during training. So when you left training and went to your village, you had your own?

HAYNES: [00:44:47] My own whole house on the compound of the pottery shop. And there was just like a rock formation to one side and a church on the other side and a pottery shop and then a road. So I didn't actually have any neighbors, which is has its pros and cons. But it was this big two bedroom house. It was pink, which was fine. And then I had a just like a bare concrete floor. It had a lot of cracks and the ants would come up through and I would have to sweep the ants out of my house like two or three times a day because there were just so many of them.

WALEY: Did they bite?

HAYNES: [00:45:31] Nope, just kind of took over. It was just during the winter that they would be around. But most of the time it was fine. And then the two bedrooms had a thatched roof, which keeps it really cool and the house really nice. And then I had two bathrooms. One had just the toilet in it and the other one had the shower and the sink in it and a shower. That one, with the shower and the sink, had a window in it to another room that was the storeroom for the pottery shop. And that room, like it was one of the rooms in my house, but I couldn't get to it. And it just had like a door from the outside. It was also connected to my bedroom. So I would hear them

in there like working during the day, like talking and gossiping. And I only took showers after business hours because of that. But when I would go in there to wash my hands or something, they'd be like, good morning Tumisang! And I was like, hey how's it going? And I had a kitchen with a sink and a stove and an oven.

WALEY: [00:46:46] What does Tumisang mean?

HAYNES: [00:46:48] To proclaim.

WALEY: [00:46:49] Oh, that's your name.

HAYNES: [00:46:50] My name. Yeah, or they would call me Tumi. That's the nickname. Or when you're calling someone like to have them come over to you, you put 'way' at the end. So instead of knocking, people would just stand on my front porch and yell my name. They'd go, Tumi! Tumisang! Tumiway! Tumi! Until I came to the door. I was like, you can just knock, it's fine.

WALEY: [00:47:19] So did you pay rent to the people who owned the pottery shop then?

HAYNES: [00:47:24] I did, yeah. My landlady was also the manager of the pottery shop. She was fierce, she was on top of anything that I ever needed help with, which, that wasn't the situation with all of the other volunteers, that people like the landlords with take care of things, but.

WALEY: [00:47:45] Did everybody live in their own house or have their own house?

HAYNES: [00:47:53] Yes. Everybody had their own house. Trying to make sure that was true. Some people had apartments and married couples shared a house, but yeah, everybody had their own place.

WALEY: [00:48:06] What was the rest of your group like?

HAYNES: [00:48:09] The rest of my group was a lot of fun. There were so many of us that, like after training, everybody went to their own parts of the country

and it was kind of hard to get to. So whenever we had like an in-service training or mid-service training, it was just a big party because we were so excited to see everybody. And sometimes I think there is a part of the country that was easier for me to get to, it was only like five and a half hours on a bus, so I'd go up and visit them sometimes. But when we wanted to get together, because we all had our own houses, we would just like to have a party and invite everybody. And people would come in on Saturday and then just like spend the night on Saturday night and then go back on Sunday. But it was really fun. It was like, it was like an adult slumber party. People just put their sleeping bags on the floor and we'd hang out and cook a really fancy dinner. Yeah, my group was great. I'm still friends with some of them and they were wonderful. One of the older volunteers sends me an email every year on my birthday. It's really sweet.

WALEY: [00:49:20] How close was the closest volunteer to you?

HAYNES: [00:49:24] So there were two really close volunteers. One was like 20 minutes in one direction and the other was like 30 minutes in the other direction. One of my friends lived, my closest friend, like she was my best friend there, lived in Molepolole which was like 30 minutes away. And then another very close volunteer, geographically and emotionally, was like 20 minutes away. And yeah, it's really easy to get to both of them.

WALEY: [00:49:58] How did you, what transportation did you use?

HAYNES: [00:50:01] We took. So there's like just a regular bus or something. We called it a kombi. It has different names. It's like a 16 passenger van, like I don't know, if you had a really big family, what you would drive. But it was like some of the seats would flip up and you could get to the back and then put the seat back down and there would just be like a lot of maybe more people than it sat in there. And sometimes there would be some poultry or a stranger's baby you were holding.

WALEY: [00:50:41] So how did you find those vans?

HAYNES: [00:50:44] They drove by, you just flag them down. I was also very lucky in that I lived on a major road that went through my village. So like a lot of

people would have to walk 30 minutes to get to a bus stop. But I could see the bus stop from my window, So I'd see the bus coming and just run outside.

WALEY: [00:51:03] How did you get to your place of work?

HAYNES: [00:51:08] I walked. It's like a 30 minute walk, over some rock formations, and through some deep sand, and passing some donkeys and goats.

WALEY: [00:51:18] And were there roads?

HAYNES: [00:51:21] There were roads. But not in the direction that I was going.

WALEY: [00:51:30] What was your village layout like?

HAYNES: [00:51:37] Uh, I'm trying to decide how to answer that. So there's a big road that went like north and south through the middle of town. And then my house was just to the east of that road, right next to it, and then right behind my house was Thamaga Hill, just a gigantic, beautiful rock formation. And it was the tallest point in Thamaga, which really helped. So any time I wandered too far from my house, I could just, like, turn around and look for that and then walk towards it. And then that's also where the pottery shop was. There's a church out there. There is like the police station was just across the street. And the one carry-out place was right there. And all the government entities were right there. So like, if I had a problem with my water bill or something else, like a five minute walk to go talk to them. And then my school, like I said, it was like a 30 minute walk east of that road. And then west of that road wasn't anything really pertinent to my life. So I just went running over there. But otherwise I didn't really know a lot about that side of town. And then I actually I had a grocery store like a full-blown grocery store in my village, and it was like a mile south of my house. It's just like a quick 15 minute walk there and back. And it had like all the produce meat and canned goods and whatever you need.

WALEY: [00:53:32] When did you cook? What did you eat while you were there?

HAYNES: [00:53:36] So I'd also just graduated from college, and that was the first time I ever lived alone. And aside from my Response service, the only time I've lived alone still. So I'm still trying to figure out how to be an adult. But Peace Corps gave us a cookbook and it wasn't about local food. It was just about food that you can eat. So it's just, you know, trying to figure it out. Pasta, sandwiches, I don't know.

WALEY: [00:54:13] Did you have a refrigerator?

HAYNES: [00:54:14] I had a refrigerator and a freezer, I had ice cubes. This is not something I usually tell to other returned Peace Corps volunteers, that I have electricity and a shower and hot water and a refrigerator because they accuse me of being in the Posh Corps.

WALEY: [00:54:33] Did you have like a fan, was it hot?

HAYNES: [00:54:37] It was so hot. And I did not get a fan until I'd been there like a year and a half. And even my other volunteers were like, just get a fan, what are you doing. And I was like, no, it's fine. I'm just having the experience, you know, like this is just stuff. And I was like, I'm not a millionaire. I'm not going to buy a fan, it's like five dollars for a fan. But I had a friend come and visit me, which was a huge deal because it is not cheap to get to Botswana. And we actually just stayed in my village for one night and then we traveled all over the country and up to Zambia. But she was like, Kelli, I'm not staying in this house without a fan. She got there in the summer in a heat wave. She's like, I am not staying in this house without a fan. And I was like, well, I don't own a fan. She's like, listen, I will buy you a fan and you can have it as long as I get to sleep with it tonight. So we walked just across the street to the store and she bought like a tall, nice oscillating fan. And it changed my life. The last six months were so much better because I had a fan. I was just like taking a cold bath and then running to sleep before I dried off too much. And then, like, halfway through the night, I would be completely dry and then have to go take another cold bath so that I could get back to sleep. It was so ridiculous.

WALEY: [00:56:12] What was the local food like?

HAYNES: [00:56:16] Really starchy. It was just like some kind of mountain of starch.

WALEY: [00:56:21] Like potatoes?

HAYNES: [00:56:23] Uh, no, like rice or something called phaletšhe, which everybody was really into and even other volunteers and I just never could get into. It's like some kind of cornstarch and water. And you just boil it until it's like a playdoh consistency. And they just like, put that lump on your plate and then you pick up your other food with it. And there's just so much, it's just so many carbs. And I'm like, don't get me wrong. I love carbs, but it's a lot. So there is that. And there is like, uh.

WALYEY: Vegetables, fruits?

HAYNES: [00:57:08] So the thing about vegetables is, that weren't a lot of vegetables because it's a desert. But then occasionally my host family would be like, we're having salad tonight and I would be so excited. And sometimes salad means fresh vegetables, but sometimes salad also just means something covered in mayonnaise.

WALEY: [00:57:30] Like chicken salad?

HAYNES: [00:57:31] Yeah, like chicken salad or like a coleslaw or beet salad. It's just shredded beets and mayonnaise. And I'm like, I don't know. I was really sick halfway through my pre-service training. And our Peace Corps medical officer was like, does your family wash vegetables before they serve them to you when you eat raw vegetables? And I was like, I don't think I've had a raw vegetable since I got here. And he's like, eat some vegetables, easy fix. So I started just like sneaking off to the grocery store and eating some raw vegetables. I was just like craving a good salad. The vegetable kind, not the mayonnaise kind.

WALEY: [00:58:16] Was it expensive to buy food there?

HAYNES: [00:58:19] No, it was pretty cheap. And oh, they also, so I grew up in Texas and they said that Botswana was the Texas of Africa. Like, what

does that even mean? They had a really big cattle industry. They also had, this is just really interesting. They had a, have still, a metal cowboy music scene. So it's like a subculture and there are people who dress in like full leather cowboy outfits. Which, it's a hundred degrees, it's so terrible to wear leather. The first leather cowboy that I saw was on like a five-hour bus ride. Nobody opened the windows because that's how you catch the flu. As the health volunteer, I contested that a lot. But, yeah. And he was just fine, I guess. I don't know. But yeah, they were really into metal music. And they have a metal cowboy festival every year in the middle of the desert.

WALEY: [00:59:29] That's crazy. How did that happen?

HAYNES: [00:59:31] How did that happen? Hard to say. What were we talking about before I got caught up on the metal cowboys?

WALEY: [00:59:37] Food, I think. Oh, cost of living.

HAYNES: [00:59:41] Beef. Yes, they have a big cattle industry. Also, there were a lot of parallels. I was living in West Texas right before I left, and I was like, this is, you know, not so different. Like everything closes really early, small town, everybody's in your business. The plant life was really similar. I had been living in a desert before. I lived in the desert now. And my mom sent me. She would send me magazines sometimes just so I could keep up. But she sent me one magazine called Texas Highways magazine, which is just like pictures of Texas and this was the West Texas edition. And I had two neighbor girls. They were like my best friends in service. They were 13 years old when I left. And they came over and they're asking about where I was from. And I was like, oh, they're like you. Oh, I think they were studying, um, they were doing science and they are learning about the types of soil. And they said, do you have soil in the U.S.? And I said, of course, what did you think that we had? I think she was 11 at the time. And she said, snow? And I was like, no, there's not snow where I come from. Where I come from is a lot like Botswana. She's like, I don't believe you, show me a picture. So I went and got the Texas Highways magazine and I showed her and she flipped through it and she was like,

this is Botswana. Where are you from? I was like, that's where I'm from. I've been telling you, they're very similar. So, yeah.

WALEY: [01:01:30] That's too funny. So your job, you said your place of work was a school. Did Peace Corps set up that that work environment for you, that work relationship for you? And then you also had mentioned that you were set up with a couple of counterparts that you ended up feeling that you weren't adding value to until you started doing your own things. How, you know, what was it like when you first got there and your assignment? And then how did you evolve that into what you ended up spending most of your time doing?

HAYNES: [01:02:00] So, um, yeah, my assignment was at the school and my counterpart was like, OK, you have these two classes and I think we're supposed to teach together. And then she talked to me about her experience and I was like, you know, we can teach together for a while so I can learn from you because you're brilliant. But then if you have other things you need to be doing, I can just take those classes. So that's what happened with that. PACT club had been, that's like a thing all over Botswana. And the previous volunteer had been doing that. So I just took it up. And then. So I had two classes that I taught a week. So I was teaching for maybe an hour and a half every week. And then with class prep, that was maybe like five hours and I had a couple hours of the after-school program, but that wasn't like a full 40 hours a week. And I had just come from college where I was like taking a full course load and I had a couple of jobs and I was applying for the Peace Corps, which is like a job in itself. And so I was just like, I've got to do more things. I hadn't quite adjusted to the pace of life yet. So every once in a while I would just tell my counterpart, I'm going to go find some other things to do, and I would go out into the community. So the first place I went was a clinic really close to my school. I just started walking around and I was like, I'm sure I'll bump into someone who needs something. It was very idealistic.

HAYNES: [01:03:47] But I found a clinic and I walked in and introduced myself and I told them I was there. They were really busy also, I was like totally inappropriate. But I was like, yeah, I'm a health volunteer. I can do whatever you need. Just wanted to introduce myself. And they were giving

H1N1 flu shots at the time. And they're like, oh, great, yeah, come on in. And you can give these people shots. And I was like, no, no, no, no, no, no. Not a health professional. Just a teacher, can't give shots and they're like, you can still give shots. And I was like, I'm not giving shots. And they're like, all right, you can record who we've given shots to. And I was like, that I can do. I feel comfortable with that. And then I feel like the hazing of all Peace Corps volunteers is weighing babies at clinics. Like a lot of health volunteers I've talked to around the world have done that, even non health volunteers.

HAYNES: [01:04:46] So in clinics every once a month until the kids are five, people bring their babies in, and toddlers, small children, to be weighed to make sure that they're still thriving, like they're gaining weight and they're growing. And it was it was another one of those weird culture shock moments where it was like, this is totally normal, but it's very new and different for me. The way that they did it was they would take off all the baby's clothes and diaper and everything, and then they brought their own bag. It was like a baby bag, like it had, like, holes cut in it and they just put it on the baby like a diaper. But it also had handles and they take the handles and hang it on a hook. And then the hook would weigh the baby.

WALEY: [01:05:37] And each family had their own baby bag?

HAYNES: [01:05:40] Yeah. They like made their own baby bag. They have their own notebook where the nurses recorded their weight and then we recorded it in the clinic's book. And there's like a chart of how much you should weigh and what the healthy range is. And I didn't weigh the babies. The mothers weighed the babies also as they got older, they were like four or five. Sometimes the kids are just like grab on to the hook and hang off of it. But it was just such a, I thought it was so hilarious. I never got over it. But it was like just a really normal. This is how you weigh your babies type of situation. Yeah. So I would record their weight and look at the chart and make sure that they were doing OK. And if they weren't thriving, we would give them some food supplements to help their kids gain weight.

HAYNES: [01:06:24] So I did that for a while and then I went and talked with the social workers. And we talked about some projects they were working on

and then my friend from the village nearby, the one that was only 20 minutes away, she had done a lot of team building work. She had worked at a camp before. And so we started doing team building with prefects at the schools, because it's on the British school system. They're like a combination between student council and hall monitors. So we just traveled around to schools where their volunteers were and worked with their prefects and team building activities. And that was so fun. It's like being a camp counselor.

HAYNES: [01:07:23] And then I had a, actually the week that I had two volunteers shadowing with me. They were in training. I met an individual who just came up to me. He was like, hey, I heard you're a Peace Corps volunteer. Can you help me with this project? And I was like yeah totally. And he was actually working on, um. He was working with people who are recovering from drug and alcohol addiction, and he was doing some prevention work in schools, but also talking with people who are in recovery and trying to figure out the best ways to build community. And one of the volunteers who was shadowing with me, coincidentally, was a recovery coach, and she worked in a rehab and she was like, did you know that about me? No, I didn't. But we're going to go meet with this guy. And she's like, oh my gosh. And they actually that ended up being a project of theirs because I was on my way out in like a month and they got to know him really well. And they ended up having to leave early, but they're still in contact with him and they still send him resources all the time. And they went to visit Botswana and they went to visit him. And that was a really cool thing. I guess it wasn't really one of my projects as much as theirs.

WALEY: [01:09:05] Facilitated. You talked about kind of your students, your peer club, and some of the students that you worked with, it did really well. What was that your favorite project?

HAYNES: [01:09:17] It was my favorite project. I actually I follow some news sources in Botswana on Facebook. And one of my other favorite students popped up. There is a video about HIV and it was a documentary and it followed a bunch of different people and they were all talking about why it's important to stay adherent to your medication and communicate with your partners and have safe sex and all this stuff. And then as I was watching, my

student popped up and he was like, listen, whether you're positive or negative, we all have a responsibility. This is something that's really affecting our country. And here's what you can do if you're positive, here's what you can do if you're negative. And he just spoke so beautifully and eloquently, he was so passionate about it. It's like I'm not crying, I'm not crying, this is fine. But, yeah, that was definitely my favorite project. And I just saw so many wonderful young people grow into amazing, amazing little snowflakes that they are.

WALEY: [01:10:32] It sounds like you were really well received in your community from the walking around and volunteering yourself for things. Were people are really receptive to what you were doing, or did you have to explain to people who you were and why you were there? It sounds like there was volunteer before you also.

HAYNES: [01:10:47] There had been volunteers there for a while, and also because there had been volunteers there since 1963, like most older adults, had a teacher who was a Peace Corps volunteer at some point or like knew a Peace Corps volunteer. So it wasn't, yeah, people knew who Peace Corps volunteers were. And we just every step of our journey was on national television or like national radio. They videotaped our swearing in and at our swearing in, we were just like goofing off and singing songs. But we're singing songs and Setswana and they videotaped it. And then that was on national news. And when I met my coworkers, they were like, oh, yeah, I saw you dancing. And I was like, cool, cool, cool, cool, cool, cool. Yeah. So everybody was like, very aware of who Peace Corps was. And I stood out a lot in my community because I'm just so obviously the only American there.

HAYNES: [01:11:56] And I walked everywhere because I didn't have a car, so they saw me all the time and people would meet me and they'd be like, yeah, I see you at the pottery shop and I see you at the school. And I'm like, yep, that's where I live and that's where I work. And they're like, sometimes I see you over in the west part of town. And I'm like, yep, that's where I go running, you know my schedule, you got it. And a couple of times people like that, the person working with people in recovery, he just walked up to me and he was like, I know you're the Peace Corps volunteer. And

another woman who worked at a nonprofit just pulled her car over while I was driving and hopped out of the car. And she's like, listen, I need your help. You get the Peace Corps volunteer, right? OK, here's what we're going to do. So that was nice that people knew, like.

WALEY: [01:12:39] Right, your mission.

HAYNES: [01:12:40] Where to find me and what I was doing. You know, I didn't have to explain to anyone what the Peace Corps was.

WALEY: [01:12:45] Do most people have cars?

HAYNES: [01:12:48] Um, well, a lot of people had cars. I don't know. I don't know how to answer that question. They expected me to have a car because they assumed that I had money. I didn't. That was hard to explain to people that I didn't have money. Also just came out of college. So I like literally, I didn't have any savings at all. So whatever my food allowance was for that month.

WALEY: [01:13:17] How much was your allowance?

HAYNES: [01:13:20] I don't remember. It's been too long. It was enough. I never went hungry. They covered my rent.

WALEY: [01:13:30] So did you go on vacations or take time off and travel?

HAYNES: [01:13:36] I did. I feel like Peace Corps is really generous with the amount of vacation days that you get. So I traveled well, like on weekends, sometimes I would go see my buddies in other villages, but I traveled to Namibia when I'd been there for a year. We took a week vacation to Namibia. It was awesome. The country was so great. And then I went to Zambia a couple of times because I loved it so much. And by the end of my service, I had like three weeks of vacation left over, like I wasn't never taking vacation, but I just had so much of it. And two of my buddies also had three weeks of vacation. So we took the last three weeks before our close of service conference, which is the last time you can take any vacation.

WALEY: [01:14:37] Which is, what, a couple of months before you actually leave service?

HAYNES: [01:14:40] Yeah, it was like three months before we left service. I mean, we're just going to take almost the whole month before that, go on vacation. So we took a bus. We all lived in southern Botswana. So we took a bus from southern Botswana all the way through northern Botswana into Zambia, to the capital of Zambia. That was a 21-hour bus ride and that was just the first leg. And then we went all the way across Zambia and then we got a ride with some American doctors or med students, I guess, across the border, because like public transportation didn't cross that border, I guess. And then we went from southern Malawi all the way to northern Malawi. And then we went hiking in this park, Nyika National Park up there, and came back down and we stayed on Lake Malawi for a little while. That's gorgeous. And we saw some people with an American accent and they were like, hey! And I was like, are you a Peace Corps volunteer? Just because I heard their American accent and pretty much the Americans that I saw were missionaries or Peace Corps volunteers. And they're like, how did you know that? I was like, lucky guess. So we hung out with them for a little bit. And then we went back to Zambia and stayed, saw Victoria Falls for a couple of days. This is my favorite vacation. That's what I'm talking about it so much. And then we took our time traveling back down south and stayed with our friends along the way. And got to close of service and saw everybody. Gosh, it was such a great vacation.

WALEY: [01:16:25] And you had it must have been fairly inexpensive to travel?

HAYNES: [01:16:29] Yeah. Bus tickets are cheap. I mean, we'd just like make sandwiches. Yeah, but oh gosh. I have to say the meals that I bought through the windows of busses were like the best meals that I had. At bus stops, people would be selling like fried chicken and french fries or like bananas. They're something called *magwinya*. Or in English they called them fat cakes. It's just like donuts, but without the sugar on it, just fried bread. And I was like, I know I shouldn't love bus station food this much, but it's my favorite. I think was just the fact that I didn't cook it for myself.

WALEY: [01:17:18] That helps. What do you think were your main, I think you already talked about your students, which was a huge benefit of your service and something that you can see helped. What do you think your main accomplishments are?

HAYNES: [01:17:41] Ok, I have a story about this. Before I left for Peace Corps. I had just graduated from college and I was moving out of my college town, so I went and bought a diploma frame for my diploma at the campus bookstore. And most people where I was from didn't know a lot about the Peace Corps. So when I told them that I was joining the Peace Corps, they said something like, oh, that's still around? Or they thought I was joining the military or something like that. But when I went to check out, the person checking me out was an international student from Madagascar. So Peace Corps is in Madagascar and she was really familiar with Peace Corps volunteers and she was checking me out. She was like, so now that you've graduated, what are you doing? I was like, I'm joining the Peace Corps. And she's like, oh my gosh, that's so great! We had a Peace Corps volunteer in my village. She's like, you know, we just sat on her porch and played cards all the time. She wasn't actually my teacher. She was a teacher. But she taught me that education is really important. And she instilled in me and now I'm getting my master's degree and she's like, what you do is so important. And that's awesome that you're doing that.

HAYNES: [01:18:59] And I'm so glad that I ran into her and she said that to me because I want to say six or seven months into my Peace Corps service there was a strike of all the government workers, which is like clinics, social workers, teachers, all the people I was working with in my village. And because you're not supposed to be involved in politics when you're a Peace Corps volunteer, they're like, don't get involved, which for me meant like just not going to work. I was like, I don't know what to do. Oh, so it's just kind of sitting around for a couple of months. And I was like, this was so dumb. I came here to make a difference and now I can't even go to work and I don't know what I'm doing. But my neighbor kids came over and played Uno on my front porch and they taught me some Setswana and I taught them some English and they had questions and I would

answer it. And we talked about how I had soil and not snow. And it was just a small thing like that. And I thought back to that woman at my university telling me that, like, actually, playing cards on the front porch isn't a waste of your time. Which I'm so glad that I had that story, because otherwise I would have just thought that I was wasting my time. Did that answer the question?

WALEY: [01:20:34] Yeah. A different perspective on what is accomplishing things.

HAYNES: [01:20:38] Cultural exchange. Yeah. It's something more experienced volunteers told me a lot. They were like, you know, two of the three goals are cultural exchange. So even if you don't feel like you're accomplishing your goals at site, if you're talking to people and you're sharing things, you learn something about their country, they learn something about your country, then you're doing most of what you're here for.

WALEY: [01:21:03] Those are goals two and three.

HAYNES: [01:21:05] Yeah. Yeah.

WALEY: [01:21:07] What about hard things? Are there big lessons that you learned or a project that you started that didn't work or regrets or anything you want to talk about for that?

HAYNES: [01:21:21] Oh gosh. A really hard thing for me was living alone. Like I said, that's not something I usually do and I wasn't used to it, and it was a big learning curve. But I think that was probably the best thing for me at that time in my life, even though it was really hard after I had lived alone for a few months. I kind of fell into a pattern of it and it gave me a lot of self-reflection time. And I think being outside of your own culture teaches you a lot about yourself and what is you and what is your culture and what your values are, and I think, yeah. That was a really hard thing. Especially just learning a new culture is really hard. So all of those and then, I mean, being a young woman in a developing country, like women all over the world have it really hard. So that was tough, just trying to learn how to navigate those situations and, in turn, teaching my students, teaching my

male students how to respect women and teaching my female students that they deserve to be respected. That was really tough.

WALEY: [01:22:57] It sounds like you had a lot of impact on the people that you worked with, especially your students. How did Peace Corps impact you and the choices you've made about your post Peace Corps life?

HAYNES: [01:23:08] Oh, in every way. Like I said, I didn't know what I wanted to do. At all. But they put me in a job teaching and speaking in front of people and doing HIV education, and I loved all of it. It was so interesting to me and I feel like it pulled on all of my strengths and all of my interests. And when I got back, I taught teenagers and I taught sex ed and I talked in front of people and I joined the Peace Corps again, I did Peace Corps Response. And I came back and taught people about HIV. And I am still a public speaker and I'm still teaching people and talking in front of people. Yeah, my whole career was shaped by where Peace Corps put me. And I say it that way because I didn't, at that time, it was just kind of like, here's a job, here's your country, get to work. But I feel like everything that I learned in the Peace Corps and everything that they put me into was exactly what I needed at the perfect time in life.

WALEY: [01:24:28] And now that you're back in the States, you're still engaged in Peace Corps third goal, which is spreading kind of your lessons you learned in Peace Corps with Americans. You want to talk a little bit about that work?

HAYNES: [01:24:41] Sure. Doing that a couple of different ways. I am registered, we have speakers match, which is where people can call you and say, we'd like you to come and speak about your experience. So I do that sometimes. Sometimes I talk to college kids at the University of Texas campus who are thinking of applying. We also have a local chapter, the Heart of Texas Peace Corps Association, and I'm the communications chair so I talk to people, um. Yeah, and that's really great. The returned Peace Corps volunteer community is really important to me and a lot of my closest friends are returned Peace Corps volunteers, whether I served with them or I met them later. But yeah, the Peace Corps, even though I haven't served in a while, is still a big part of my identity.

WALEY: [01:25:47] Is there anything else that you want to say to summarize your service in Peace Corps or impacts or lessons learned or best parts?

HAYNES: [01:26:05] Yeah. Gosh. I think very often people ask you how your Peace Corps service was, which is the question I always hate because it was several years of my life and it's hard to summarize several years of your life, but I feel like I definitely was challenged in my Peace Corps service. And I grew a lot as a person and I learned a lot of things about the world. I learned that it is both much larger and much smaller than I knew and I learned a lot about myself and how to work with people and to work with compassion. Yeah, taught me a lot of important life lessons.

WALEY: [01:27:09] What advice might you give to somebody who's considering the Peace Corps?

HAYNES: [01:27:19] That's a good question. I would tell them not to do it unless they are really sure it's what they wanted to do and because it's hard. And I would tell them to keep an open mind, which is the infuriating advice all returned Peace Corps volunteers give you, is that you shouldn't have any expectations, which is just impossible to do. But it's true, don't have any expectations. And probably to remember that two of the three goals are just hanging out with people, get to know some people and you're doing your job.

WALEY: [01:28:09] Well, thank you, Kelli.

HAYNES: [01:28:10] Yeah, thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]