

# An exciting alternative

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VISIONS INTERNATIONAL students and staff

photo by Hemant

Part of growing up involves socialising and interacting with ones peers within schools and various organised groups and projects. One such organisation is **Visions International Inc.**, a non sectarian summer program which offers community service experiences in cross-cultural settings for students between the ages of fourteen and eighteen.

Visions took its form in providing community service and allowing children to experience foreign cultures topping it off with outdoor adventure and intercultural activities in Newport, Pennsylvania in 1989. This non-profit organisation has been exposing the children of the BVI in particular Virgin Gorda to this Junior Peace Corp., since 1992.

One of their objectives is offering opportunities to work with and for people of different culture while living in community buildings and working alongside the local people to help improve their communities. They even take time out to socialize with neighbors and attend ceremonies and festivities.

A summer with Visions is described by organisers as an intense and rewarding experience which teaches new skills and allows

participants a challenge, emotionally, physically and intellectually.

The work of Visions can be seen in countries such as the Dominican Republic, The BVI, Dominica and Guadeloupe and the American states of Montana and Alaska with a summer staff of about ninety and other community workers. The staff of Visions believes that teenagers are responsible capable individuals, therefore they allow them to experiment, make mistakes learn and grow within the program framework while involving themselves side by side instructing, encouraging and supporting their every effort.

As young people thrive on excitement to help their development, time is always set aside for fun activities such as; rock climbing, rafting, wilderness, backpacking, horseback riding, ice climbing, Snorkeling and scuba diving.

At the end of a Visions summer the organisation expects participants to emerge more aware of themselves, the world around them and what they can do.

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encouragement to participants who have completed the program includes a Certificate of Service also, Visions offers a limited number of partial and full scholarships based on need and demonstrated initiative. Opportunity is also available for participants to receive financial support.

The benefits from this growing concept of productive socialisation are tremendous. The friendships and acquaintances provide countless avenues for networking and global cooperation. It is indeed an experience worth attempting.