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WORKING FOR THE WORLD



“Our mission is to address critical social issues by developing leaders, strengthening organizations, and promoting innovation.” — Scott Beale (C’98), founder of Atlas Corps.

January 10, 2013—As the founder of [Atlas Corps](#), a leading nonprofit organization committed to social entrepreneurship, Scott Beale (C’98) trains young people to do great things for different countries.

A [government](#) major and [economics](#) minor, Beale credits Georgetown College with helping him forge a career to effect social change.

“My time at Georgetown was defined by public service and community service through groups like Alpha Phi Omega, GUSA [Georgetown University Student Association], Campaign Georgetown, and much more,” he said. “Not only did Georgetown academically prepare me for pursuing a career in these fields, the people that I was surrounded by reinforced my commitment to service and encouraged me to take my activism further.”

After graduating, Beale worked as a legislative assistant for then Governor of Delaware Tom Carper, and later served as associate director of intergovernmental affairs in the White House for the Clinton administration. In 2001, he joined the nonprofit Ashoka: Innovators for the Public to lead its youth mentoring initiative.

Shortly thereafter, Beale moved to India—with wife Courtney Beale (F’02)—where from 2004 to 2006 he collaborated with the U.S. State Department and the New Delhi Embassy to fight human trafficking. While living in India, he was motivated to create Atlas Corps when he noticed that, though the United States is famous for sending volunteers overseas, many other countries produce few volunteers for either themselves or for other nations.

“You see people going from India to Seattle to invent Hotmail. The guy who did that becomes a billionaire, and we all benefit because you and I can email each other for free,” Beale said.

“But what you didn’t see so much was people from the nonprofit sector of India going to the nonprofit sector of the United States,” he said, “despite the fact that there were thousands of Americans who had been volunteers in India, or, through the Peace Corps, multiple thousands of people volunteering in countries around the world.”

As Beale looked into this phenomenon—the dearth of Indian volunteers in the United States and, more broadly, the lack of non-Western volunteers in countries around the world—he noticed “a marked failure that existed in the international volunteerism space.” He learned about people who wanted to serve non-domestic communities or fight global causes, but could not because they did not have the money or the right visa.

“It was a lot more affordable for someone from the United States to volunteer in Nairobi than for someone from Kenya to volunteer in DC,” Beale said. “Nairobi is a cheaper city than DC, but more than that, the U.S. citizen can get support from the U.S. government through groups like the Peace Corps, or even from churches or universities.

“In 2006, I decided to start Atlas Corps with this vision of creating a global network of the world’s best rising nonprofit leaders,” he continued. “Our mission is to address critical social issues by developing leaders, strengthening organizations, and promoting innovation.”

According to Beale, Atlas Corps works not only to empower its members to be successful social entrepreneurs—self-starters who use business tactics to address social concerns—but also to promote the volunteer groups it works with like UNICEF, Susan G. Komen for the Cure, and the Special Olympics.

“When I bring in somebody from Spain who’s an expert on social media or social change and place him or her in Habitat for Humanity, that Spanish leader becomes a more effective nonprofit professional, but Habitat for Humanity becomes a better organization as well,” Beale explained.

“Many of the largest nonprofits in the world have partnered with us to take our fellows because we find extremely talented people and have a very diverse network.”

If nothing else, Beale has learned through his involvement with Atlas Corps the importance of learning from and about other cultures.

“It’s a fact that Indians and Egyptians and Mexicans and Colombians communicate in different ways, have different perspectives on the world,” Beale said. “But these people come together in our fellowship like we’re their long-lost family.

“It’s a beautiful thing when you walk into an Atlas Corps training and there are 50 or 60 people in the room from 45 different countries. It gives you great hope for the world—a great sense of belief that we can tackle challenges that we’ve never been able to tackle before.”

—Brittany Coombs



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