

Bio Without Borders

Wednesday, December 10, 2014

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KATE CART (AT LEFT, HOLDING DOG) IN

PERU WITH
OTHER MEMBERS OF THE UNH ENGINEERS WITHOUT
BORDERS

A biology major specializing in biomedical science, Kate Cart '15 is one of the only non-engineering majors in the UNH student chapter of Engineers Without Borders. She's been involved since her sophomore year, when she served as the group's liaison to the organic gardening club. Last May, she traveled to Peru with the group, serving as nutrition lead on a project to replace a failing water pipe in the Andean town of San Pedro de Casta, a farming community at about 10,000 feet. Along with a lot of digging, Cart's main focus was to conduct a survey of schoolchildren to find out more about their health. She distributed a questionnaire and recorded their physical measurements such as height and waist circumference. Cart says that like many areas in the developing world, residents of San Pedro de Casta have seen an influx of packaged, processed foods. "They are getting way more calories than they used to," Cart says. "You can see that in the height differences between the generations. But they are also getting much more sugar."

This semester, Cart is creating a video aimed at teaching the townspeople how to eat healthfully amid all the new food choices. She says they can do this by harnessing one of their greatest talents — farming — but currently "they export a huge amount of their produce." By reducing the amount they export, they could keep more healthy food for

themselves. This is one of the suggestions in Cart’s video, but “It’s tricky,” she admits, “because it’s a cultural and economic issue.”

This project is ongoing. The group is seeking contributions to fund a trip back to Peru and elsewhere. Go to unhewb.org to learn more or make a donation.

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