

# Broadreach

BY MADOLYN IMKO  
Ink contributor

Three summers ago, Julia Anderson left Charleston and joined a group of teens for what she says was one of the best experiences of her life. She traveled to the Caribbean through Broadreach, and then returned there this past summer to sail, dive, hike and swim in exotic places many teens only hear about.

Broadreach is a program that takes small groups of teens on hands-on adventures all over the world, including Australia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, the Galapagos, Honduras, Baja, Fiji and Egypt.

On her first trip to the Caribbean, Julia's sailing voyage covered about 600 miles over 32 days with six boys and five other girls. She learned to scuba dive, cook and clean for herself and operate the boat, not to mention the valuable lessons about working with other people. "It was a very demanding journey," Julia explains. "Sailing the ship was constant work, and we took about three dives a day."

During her trip, Julia learned firsthand about weather patterns, marine life, ocean currents and following maps. Julia and her team also visited Bequia, a famous whaling town, and hiked to places like Grenada's Concord Falls, and through the jungles of Dominica.

"The best part was the scuba diving," she says. "It's a whole new world of rich colors and interesting creatures."

The team took dives during the day and also with flashlights at night. They even went diving near a shipwreck and observed how fish and other sea creatures adapted to the wreckage. "Every dive is something different. You never know what you'll find."

Julia's second trip to the Caribbean took her back to Grenada and also to the Grenadines, a series of Windward Islands. This trip lasted 21 days, and like the first one with Broadreach, included intense sailing, but because she already had her certification from the Professional Association of Diving Instructors, many things were like sec-



Julia Anderson holds a turtle during a visit to Bequia's Old Hegg Turtle Sanctuary in the Caribbean.

ond nature to Julia.

Her group explored Grenada's jungle full of waterfalls and went on guided hikes. They even climbed St. Vincent's 4,000-foot volcano. When her team stopped on land, islanders would welcome them immediately. It reminded Julia of Charleston. "It was a lot like the Market downtown," she says, "vendors selling everything from fruit to hand-crafted jewel-

ry." As part of their community service project, the team visited Bequia's Old Hegg Turtle Sanctuary, which works to replenish the hawksbill turtle population. Julia and her group had lots of fun learning about the rescue program as well as working with the animals themselves.

The team also scuba-dived, exploring beautiful coral reefs and various animals, such as dolphins,

sharks, rays, hawksbill turtles and more. "The creatures you saw would depend on what time you would go," she says. In the early morning, her team would watch sharks sleeping and in the afternoon, the rays would swim out in front of her group. "It is amazing how the animals actually come up close to you."

Broadreach doesn't require any previous experience, and there

## MORE ABOUT BROADREACH

If you are interested in making Broadreach part of your next summer vacation, call toll-free to get more information at (888) 833-1907. Or visit [www.gobroadreach.com](http://www.gobroadreach.com), which includes information about the different trips with a calendar of dates, photos and a bulletin board.

► Broadreach has conducted more than 275 trips since 1992.

► Participants are ages 13-19, and grouped by age.

► Average cost: \$2,880-\$4,990.

► Groups range from 10-14 people.

► Trips are taken in June, July and August.

► Participants spend about 4-8 hours on community service each trip.

are trained counselors to help lead the group. A wide range of activities are offered such as whitewater rafting, sea kayaking, rock climbing, camel trekking, backcountry hiking, whale and dolphin studies and desert safari. Students may receive class or community service credit for some trips.

Through her trips, Julia says, she learned to take the initiative to try new things and became more confident in her abilities as a result. "(Broadreach) taught me all about teamwork, leadership and how to be more open to people different than me. It also taught me about independence. I used to get homesick a lot, but after my trip I realized I could do most things for myself."

She explains how Broadreach helped her be more tolerant. "I came into the group not knowing other people's backgrounds, like if they were popular or not. We got to know each other and respect each other because everyone was honest and accepting."

Her team used a system called "Leader of the Day," in which each member had a turn to determine the group's daily activities. Julia found she enjoyed being in a leadership position, and today, she is president of the junior class at Ashley Hall.

Julia stays in contact with her teammates via e-mail. As for next summer, she plans to visit Fiji or Australia.

**Madolyn Imko, 15, is a junior at Ashley Hall.**

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# INK

*By teens, for teens*

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PROVIDED

Julia Anderson with fellow Broadreach adventurers in front of Grenada's Concord Falls, a Caribbean waterfall. It's ideal for swimming after a long hike.



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Julia and her teammates sailed on this 50-foot yacht for 32 days.