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# maintain trails on kilimanjaro

MOUNT KILIMANJARO, TANZANIA

Like the rest of Africa, Tanzania is a developing country. Those who require uninterrupted electricity, daily hot showers,...and wireless Internet access may find a weekend at home with the

Discovery Channel more to their liking.

—Diane Carman, climber of Kilimanjaro with  
Adventures within Reach

**24** Anybody who has ever climbed Mount Kilimanjaro knows at least one Swahili word: *pole*. It means “go slowly.” Guides repeat it over and over again, hoping to convince climbers of the importance of taking their time, letting their bodies acclimate as they make their way up the dormant volcano that dominates the plains of northeastern Tanzania.

Because it requires no specialized training, ropes, or ice picks to get to the top, this mountain that Ernest Hemingway described as “wide as all the world, great, high, and unbelievably white in the sun” is known as Everyman’s Everest. Anybody in moderately decent shape can scale it. But that’s not to say it’s risk free. Every year, a hiker or two dies from acute mountain sickness caused by lack of oxygen. Others go temporarily blind or loco, not even remembering that they beat the 19,341-foot monster.

Done right, the Machame Route, one of six paths to the summit of Africa’s highest mountain, takes six days. On Adventures within Reach’s volunteer vacation to Tanzania, you’ll definitely “pole-pole,” because you’ll be taking eight days on the climb, while helping the Mount Kilimanjaro Porter’s Society clean up the trails.

Robin Paschall, owner of Adventures within Reach, will never forget her first summiting of the snowcapped giant. “Here we were at 16,000 feet and there was all this trash,” she says. “We gathered it up and tried to burn it, but it was moist, and there wasn’t enough



oxygen. We did what we could, but we knew that another strong wind would soon come along and the trash would be right back where it started.”

So now the trekking and safari company from Boulder, Colorado (they also offer what they call “dream adventures” to the Himalaya, Peru, and the Galápagos Islands) organizes volunteers to maintain the trails.

On this yearly volunteer vacation, which also includes seven days helping out at the Shalom Orphanage in Karatu, you will, of course, have the chance to summit the famous white-topped mountain (although some on this volunteer vacation opt not to take the full-moon, midnight journey to the top), and you will also go on safari. But most of your time will be spent bettering the lives and the environment of the Tanzanian people.

Paschall inadvertently discovered the Shalom Orphanage, an out-of-the-way home and school in desperate need of funding, while on safari herself. “All these darling kids came out and waved,” she says. “It’s one thing knowing foreign tourism dollars provide jobs, but we believe travelers and especially tour operators have an additional responsibility to address the overwhelming needs of the countries we visit.” Shalom, located in the village of Karatu between Lake Manyara and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, has 33 kids between the ages of 1 and 8.

“Invariably, our travelers would come back from their trips and want to send things over to help out the porters or help the kids at the orphanage. As much

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## THE GREATER GOODS

Adventures within Reach also offers a volunteer trip to poor, remote villages in Nepal. Working with the Butterfly Project, this Free-a-Child volunteer vacation aims to prevent sex trafficking. Every year, up to 10,000 Nepalese children between the ages of 8 and 16 are tricked, bought, or kidnapped to work in the brothels of India.

Because these kids live in dire poverty and have little or no education, Free-a-Child works not only to inform families in highly trafficked areas about the problem but also to provide training in such income-producing businesses as goat and buffalo farming, ginger and mushroom cultivation, tailoring, and paper crafts. This 13-day trip, including cultural tours in Kathmandu and a visit to the Chitwan Jungle Lodge, is priced at \$2,840.

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as we'd encourage them to gather things before they go and take it with them, we found that it wasn't until they were actually there that they became so deeply affected," Paschall said.

First, her company started a nonprofit organization (Charities within Reach) to collectively gather hiking gear, school supplies, and other essentials that her deeply moved clients wanted to send. Now, with the nearly monthlong volunteer vacation annually, the company takes it a step further, allowing hikers to physically help out as well.

The cost for the 24-day volunteer vacation is \$3,525 per person and includes meals, accommodations, the safari, and the opportunity to climb Mount Kilimanjaro.

Adventures within Reach also offers trips to Bhutan, Tibet, Nepal (see sidebar p. 71), Peru, and the Galápagos.

#### HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

**Adventures within Reach**, 2527 Broadway Street, Boulder, CO 80304, 877-232-5836 or 303-325-3746, [www.adventureswithinreach.com](http://www.adventureswithinreach.com).