



Engineers Without Borders

working to improve water supply in Bolivia.

When Chris Holden, a Ph.D. candidate for biomedical engineering, helped form the Virginia Commonwealth Chapter of Engineers Without Borders (EWB) in early 2011, he had a vision. Along with his fellow founding and current chapter members, Holden wanted to combine his engineering training with opportunities to provide assistance to those in need around the world. A lot has happened since Spring 2011.

With more than 350 projects in over 45 developing countries, EWB chapters work to bring basic necessities of life such as clean water, sanitation, energy and education to those who need it most. In accordance with EWB guidelines, each chapter makes a five-year commitment to a project by designing and implementing solutions suited to a specific community. Local community members and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are then trained to sustain the work after the chapter leaves.

"We wanted to go somewhere where transportation costs wouldn't be too high," said Holden. "So we applied to work on a water distribution project in Bolivia. Our group of five went on an assessment trip in October to the San Antonia de Lome-rio community in the Amazon basin, close to Brazil. We were there for four days working on a tight timeline."

The group performed water testing, geographical studies and community health assessments designed to assist in the development of a long-term strategy to bring safe water access to families, farms and businesses.

"It's usually the women and children who have to handle the water," Holden said. "They spend hours standing in line to get clean water from one of the community's wells. We want to minimize the burden and the time it takes to get water."

Christopher Holden(left), Aruna Anbazhagan, Luca Terziotti(top), Allison Yaguchi(bott), Thea Pepperl, and Sergio Salinas(right).

