Our mission is to empower the local communities of Bocas del Toro, Panama, through education and community development.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Education**
To operate as a learning and service based organization that provides high quality educational programs that are accessible to all as well as a meaningful international experience for the volunteers who visit us.

**Sustainability**
To improve the overall well-being of the communities we serve through sustainable growth, financial viability, and collaboration with the local government, businesses, and key stakeholders.

**Empowerment**
To provide leadership and development opportunities that promote locally driven, long-term, self-determined solutions that address environmental, economic, and social issues that exist now and arise in the future.

**Cultural Appreciation**
To create an inclusive and welcoming environment that celebrates the heritage and culture of the communities we serve as well as promotes diversity and global citizenship.
LEADERSHIP TEAM

Neil Christiansen  
Founder/President  
Holding the space and vision that all things Give & Surf come from the heart.

Emily Talentino  
Executive Director  
Seamlessly weaving together all the moving pieces of Give & Surf.

Emilie Street  
Program Director  
Assuring our programs have the greatest impact possible.

Alejandro Jonah  
Outreach Director  
The glue connecting Give & Surf to the people of Bocas del Toro and beyond.

Taylor Love  
Volunteer Director  
Assuring an epic volunteer experience for all from start to finish.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Neil Christiansen
Bocas del Toro, Panama
President & Founder of Give and Surf

Elyse Eng
New York, New York
Springfield Capital Management

Margaret Ann
Bocas del Toro, Panama
Owner & Founder of La Loma Jungle Lodge

Stuart Grauer
Encinitas, California
President of The Grauer Foundation for Education

Eric Adams
Long Beach, California
Lead Product Designer, OMB Warehouse
A NOTE FROM NEIL,

Give & Surf stumbled into the world through an undeniable calling from my highest self to serve. 8 years later and a family of hearts has miraculously manifested to connect and serve their greatest good through the support of education for now over 1,000 students weekly. This picture from last month reminds me of why and how this all came to be. Vaneza, Bahia Honda’s lead early childhood education teacher, has been by my side since the inception of Give & Surf. How, after 8 years, are we still standing side by side congratulating Antolin, another student who is leaving Escuelita to 1st grade with an understanding of himself and the world that will hold a special place in his heart for life? It is because of the connection, the love, the recognition that we are here at Give & Surf to be seen for our authenticity, our truth, and our unified calling to grow our own understanding of self and others through service to the communities of Bocas del Toro. It is the countless number of experiences we the staff, the volunteers, the students, and the community members have shared because we wish to feel a connection to the world through this work. We keep coming back because our heart strings are tied together in a mystical way that makes us a family, The Give & Surf Family.

In gratitude for your contributions,

Neil Christiansen
Founder/President
6 Islands
- Isla Colon
- Isla Bastimentos
- Isla Solarte
- Isla Carenero
- Isla San Cristobal
- Isla Popa Uno

10 Communities
- Bocas del Drago
- Bocas Town
- Carenero
- Old Bank
- Bahia Roja
- Bahia Honda
- Solarte
- San Cristobal
- Popa Uno
- Buen Esperanza
Communities We Serve

Old Bank Community
- Community Center
- After School Program, Extracurricular Activities, Summer Camp
- School Lunch Program
- SOMP (Surf Outreach and Mentorship)
- Scholarships

Bahia Roja Community
- Preschool
- Summer Camp
- School Lunch Program
- Scholarships

Bahia Honda Community
- Preschool
- Summer Camp
- School Lunch Program
- Scholarships
- Preschool Construction

Solarte Community
- School Lunch Program
- Scholarships

Isla Solarde

Isla Bastimentos
Communities We Serve

San Cristobal Community
- Community Center After-School Program
- School Lunch Program
- Scholarships

Boca del Drago
- Scholarships
- School Lunch Program

Buena Esperanza Community
- Transportation of High-School Students to School

Popa Uno Community
- Community Infrastructure Improvement:
  - Water, Solar, Kitchen, Internet

Bocas Town Community
- Community Center After-School Program
- Scholarships
- School Lunch Program
- Preschool Construction
- Community Center Construction

Carenero Community
- Scholarships
- School Lunch Program
2018 was a milestone year for Give and Surf! For the first time in our 8 year history, we expanded our community development talents to the “main island,” Isla Colon, with two huge projects! First, we completed a new preschool classroom for the Escuela Nicaragua, the main public elementary school on the island, thanks to Surf for Life and the Ministry of Education! Next came a massive, 4 classroom community center located right on the beach thanks to Carl von Mertens and The Sunshine Heroes Foundation!

Bocas wasn’t the only island getting some action this year; we also put in a brand new preschool facility where it all started, Bahia Honda, with a huge thanks to the University of Nebraska and Morristown Beard High School!
The Bocas community center is a hub of programs, learning, fun, sports, and community connection for Isla Colon. The center was made possible by some amazing people, and will continue to change countless lives for years to come. We are forever grateful for the support that Carl von Mertens and his crew has shown Give & Surf over the years, now with 4 projects completed under their belts. A huge thanks also goes to The Sunshine Heroes Foundation who supported the project financially and physically by coming down to Bocas and putting on the finishing touches!

**Project Cost:** $50,000  
**Completed:** March 2018  
**Thanks:** Carl von Mertens, Sunshine Heroes Foundation
We completed our first Bocas Town project ever in 2018, thanks to partnerships with MEDUCA (the Ministry of Education), and Surf for Life! More preschool space is in dire need all over the Bocas islands because of a rapid increase in population over the last 15 years due to tourism, foreign investment and people seeking employment in these sectors. The increase in population has caused overcrowding in the schools as there isn’t enough classroom space to support all of the children. Thanks to Surf for Life, MEDUCA, and Give & Surf, the Escuela Nicaragua has a brand new preschool classroom for the 2019 school year!

Project Cost: $24,000
Completed: March, 2018
Thanks: Surf for Life, MEDUCA
Give & Surf started in the small community of Bahia Honda on the island of Bastimentos in 2011. For 8 years we have provided the children of this community with a unique and impactful preschool experience shared with hundreds of volunteers from all over the world. In June of 2018, we cemented our presence in this community by completing our own preschool classroom, built on land donated by the parents of the community. This dream was made a reality thanks to the University of Nebraska and Morristown Beard High School, and the thousands of others that have believed in Give & Surf throughout our history!
COMMUNITY CENTER

STORY

Kimberly is one of our star Bocas Community Center attendees! She comes to the community center as often as she can and usually brings her nieces along as well. Her favorite class is Yoga, and she was so good at it that the community center yoga teacher invited her to one of her adult classes where she was able to successfully complete the whole class! Kimberly also loves the art projects that take place at the community center and she enjoys being able to help her nieces and her friends complete them!
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: BOCAS COMMUNITY CENTER & BUENA ESPERANZA

The opening of the Bocas Community Center in May of 2018 was a huge step for Give & Surf and for Isla Colon. The center is the only of its kind on the island and has already made a big impact on the community. The center is open six days a week and its mission is to provide children, families, and adults with a fun, safe space for educational programs and other activities and classes as desired by the community. Weekly programs have included yoga, science experiments, environmental education, arts and crafts, english, Tae Kwon Do, sports, music, summer camp, and more! Because of the center’s convenient location on the main island, we have also been able to partner with a lot of amazing people and other local organizations, making it truly a community wide effort!

In 2018 we partnered with the Buena Esperanza community and were able to raise $3,000 to pay for the transportation of 15 kids to the nearby middle school each day. Before this program was initiated, only 5 kids went to middle school from this community of 50 families. Now, with the help of community leaders, neighbors, and Give & Surf, 15 students are able to afford to go to middle school from Buena Esperanza!
In another huge 2018 development, we are proud to announce that we are now a registered non-profit in Panama under the name Dar y Servir: Give and Serve. Sustainability and local empowerment are pillars of our organization and for this reason we committed over a year ago to achieving NGO status in Panama. The principal purpose for this commitment is to put strategic planning in the hands of our all Panamanian board who are committed to ensuring the local communities of Bocas del Toro are receiving the very best from Give & Surf. As a non-profit in Panama we are now able to build funding channels with government agencies, the ministry of education, and Panamanian corporations and citizens. This step is another in solidifying our permanence and purpose to support Bocas del Toro and its growth towards a better future!
STAR SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT:
ANA MORALES

Ana Moralez, second from the right, is an inspiration to all. Ana’s story was born out of a deep connection 7 years ago between our 3rd ever volunteer June and Ana, then 10. June, felt a connection to support Ana, a parentless, timid little girl whose innocence and warm heart filled June’s with hope that one day she could support Ana to be all and anything she wished to be. After 7 years of supporting Ana through an education scholarship, a new Ana emerged; a confident, high school graduate with a taste for life and a sense of self discovered through consistent, loving support from June and the Give & Surf staff. Thank you to June and the hundreds of people who make continued education scholarships possible for children and adults around the island archipelago.
STAFF HIGHLIGHT:

EMILIE STREET

Emilie shows up everyday to serve because she cares. Cares about the teacher who looks to her for support. Cares about the child whose smile she knows as her own. Cares because that is her essence. Emilie brings it day in and day out because she doesn't know any different and for that we at Give & Surf are in gratitude for her daily contributions to assure that our education programs are making the greatest impact possible. Emilie's journey like many in Give & Surf started as an intern thrown into the unknown as we trusted her to set up the Cristobal Community Center with very little oversight and she did it! This experience left her with an understanding that she a) can tackle the most challenging of tasks and b) had a soul contract with Bocas del Toro and Give & Surf to return. The mysterious window of opportunity brought our caring, thoughtful Program Director back to take on a life aligned with her being; to care.
STAFF HIGHLIGHT:
TAYLOR LOVE

Taylor, much like Emilie, tasted as a volunteer with Give & Surf something he longed to embrace for life and so when that same mystery window cleared he entered full force back into the Give & Surf world as the man to captain volunteers through their own Give & Surf experience. He is the Give & Surf experience guru hosting a myriad of individuals that call on him for everything from holding space for emotions to flow to weekend camping trips at Polo Beach. Taylor literally bends over backwards to meet the full spectrum of volunteers with an open, electric heart that brings it night and day. Taylor’s is the link between volunteers and the community. He is the reason why a volunteer with 0 spanish background and 0 time spent out of the country leaves Panama feeling more connected to humanity than ever before and for this we salute you brother!
ESCUELITA STORY

Maduli, located in the bottom left of this photo, is one of our escuelita students in the Bahia Honda community on the island of Bastimentos. Mayuli’s older sister is a recent graduate of our escuelita program. Maduli has grown to be a leader in her Bahia Honda class and is not afraid to tell the other children to sit down in the boat or to help the teachers with the day’s tasks. She is quiet but is a quick learner and has an impressive English vocabulary for her peer group. We are looking forward to seeing Mayuli grow into a future leader of the Bahia Honda Community!
2018 CHANGE MAKERS

INTERNS
Rebecca Argueta
Tenzin Seldon
Adriana Ongay
Mariella
Hernandez
Jake Peters
David Monsees
Kathy Xu

VOLUNTEERS
Emily Graham
Bethany Smith
Morgan-Taylor Miller
Gillian Skinner
Jurgen Ziegler
Florent Scalpel
Latricia Tolbert
Louise Sandback
Richard Kneeece and Friend
Marco Marinucci & Family
Mali Vander Leest
Kristin Bedwell
Sam Solich
Luke Sommer
Rohan Singh
Kylie Valentine
Nick Buda
Caroline Rath
Anna Bay
Joe Green
Emilie Street
Rose Johnson

GROUPS
Carl Von Mertens & Friends
Surf for Life
VIVA Lacrosse
The Sunshine Heroes Foundation
University of Nebraska Athletics
Morristown-Beard High School
Lacrosse the Nations
Gill St. Bernards High School
2018 Key Donors

**Gran Patrocinador - $10,000+**
- Bob & Carol Christiansen
- Sunshine Heroes Foundation
- Surf for Life
- Carl von Mertens
- Laws of Life
- University of Nebraska Athletics

**Patrocinador - $5,000+**
- Joan & Gary Berger
- Jesse & Tera García
- Johnson & Johnson
- Sarah & Peter Sandback
- The Foundation at Red Frog
- Ted & Elmer
- Morristown Beard High School

**Padrino - $1,000+**
- Education is Power
- Marina Niggli
- Karen Frykman
- Samantha Solich
- Traben Pleasant
- Andrew Seymour
- James Reeve
- Eric & Robyn Adams

**Promotor - $500+**
- Ken Talentino
- Connect & Care
- Panama Concierge
- Mary Heckrotte
- Jungeun You
- Lisa Warren
- Fidelity Trust
- American Online Giving
- Changing Tides Foundation
- Gregory Solich
- Rebecca Kuchar
FINANCIALS 2018

Give & Surf had a record financial year in 2018, raising $427,860 towards our mission of providing educational programs and community development for deserving communities in Bocas del Toro. We follow the Non-Profit best practice of keeping our administration and overhead expenses below 20%, and it is our goal to have as much money as possible go towards the funding of educational programs. Thanks to so many volunteers, donors, and partnerships, we are able to sustainably continue our mission here in Bocas del Toro!
Thank You