FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Autobiography & Memoir

I Did What I Had To Do!
James E. Diamond
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"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world," Anne Frank said. For many of us, the sacrifice it can take to make a difference in the world becomes intimidating. But as Dr. James Diamond reveals in his memoir *I Did What I Had to Do!* the payoff can be well worth it.

I Did What I Had to Do! recounts the experiences of James Diamond and his wife, Betty, who spent two years as Peace Corps volunteers in Chad. As Diamond shares, themes of selfless giving, respect for other cultures, and the beauty of human dignity emerge. The culture of Chad takes center stage, as his work depended on understanding the ways of the people he served.

Diamond begins by explaining why he joined the Peace Corps and the training he and his wife received. He tells how he came to appreciate the culture and people of Chad. And he explains how he selected the projects he and his wife undertook. After discovering people's everyday needs, he sought solutions that utilized free or low-cost local materials and skills people already possessed.

Diamond, a farmer and professor of Agricultural and Environmental Science, found his skills and creative ideas could meaningfully benefit the people of Chad. He shares about projects to build pit silos so cattle could survive Chad's lengthy dry season. And he tells how he introduced simple changes to farming practices that drastically eased workers' labor and improved crop yields. Meanwhile, his wife taught women home economic skills, increasing their value as wives. Readers join the journey as the Diamonds discover how small improvements can transform people's lives.

The memoir proves uniquely captivating. While the writing seems dry at times, and occasionally gives unnecessary technical details, the stories are compelling. They provide interesting insights into what life was like for the early participants in the Peace Corps, and they reveal the thoughtfulness and care behind Peace Corps work. For those interested in Peace

Corps or similar efforts, the book reveals what to expect as a volunteer. And it inspires other readers to break out of their self-focused lives and serve others. And readers may just discover, as the Diamonds did, that hard work for others brings greater meaning than almost anything else one tackles in life. The Diamonds show why they found, as the Peace Corps promised, that this was the toughest job they ever loved.

Diane Gardner