



## **John '08 and Ashley Boumgarden: Brooklyn-Based Couple Gives Back**

John never planned to be a teacher. A **political science and sociology major**, with a minor in urban studies, he was seriously considering pursuing a master's in public policy after graduation. That spring, he was approached by a recruiter for Teach for America. Eventually John was convinced of the wisdom to “see how educational issues manifest themselves on the ground” before wading into public policy work.

Soon John was participating in a five-week Teach for America “crash course” in curriculum and classroom management. He was placed teaching fifth graders in an under-resourced school in urban St. Louis, Missouri. Looking back, he describes those two years as a “very trying” experience. John then decided to “reclaim his urban teaching experience,” and the next year he joined a reform-minded charter school in Brooklyn.

John believes his years at Calvin changed him. “At Calvin I learned how Christianity is expressed in an academic context... in my sociology classes.” John also points to his community of friends as a formative force during his Calvin years. “These relationships are part of who I am – and it changed me.”

Many aspects of John's Calvin experience were made possible by a scholarship he received as a student. “The scholarship... allowed me to go to Southern Africa, to live abroad, and not be so tied to a summer job.”

John wanted to find a way to give back... John started a scholarship to help out current students. John says “... it's important to find meaningful ways to support the community that shaped me.”