By Heather Vander Plaat

Four years with the Nykerk Cup competition, the last as general chair (at right, above), provided Four years with the Nykerk Cup competition, the last as general chair (at right, above), provided Anita Van Engen ‘98 Bateman, using one’s talents to serve others is not an option – it’s a responsibility. Although Bateman works on a demanding technical leadership role at IBM in Austin, Texas, her pace of life doesn’t slow down when she leaves the office at the end of the day. In fact, much of her spare time is devoted to a diverse group of causes close to her heart. “Using the gifts that God has given me to the utmost is very important to me,” Bateman said. “Some of that means giving financially and some of it means giving my time. Sometimes in the day-to-day corporate world, you can lose sight of the bigger picture, so being involved in other activities helps to remind me of what’s important.” For several years, Anita and her husband, John Bateman ’97, have volunteered with the Latin American Leadership Development Program of Latin American Christian Ministries. The summer following her junior year, Bateman was one of five new members of the board of directors of Hope’s Alumni Association. The board meetings are bringing Bateman back to Hope on a regular basis, offering her greater opportunity to be involved in the institution where she feels much of her personal growth occurred. “I am a much more complete person, because of the different types of activities I was part of at Hope,” she said. “I’ve gone on to do my master’s in computer science at the University of Texas at Austin, and when I compare my Hope experience with what I imagine it would have been like to be an undergrad at a large university, I don’t think I would have been as challenged or enriched in the various personal ways had I not been at Hope.”

While she was a student, Bateman engaged in a long list of co-curricular activities, including Spring Break mission trips, mortar board, IVE League, fellowship of Christian students and a summer internship. She also participated in the Nykerk Cup competition her first two years at Hope, going on to serve as junior chair and then as general chair her senior year. “That was a wonderful way to make friends my first two years, and I really enjoyed the leadership portion my junior and senior years,” Bateman said. “I learned a great deal about working through some of the challenges that come along with group dynamics and organizational leadership.”

Additionally, when the Summer of Service program kicked off in June of 1995, Bateman was among the first group of students to participate. During the eight-week program, daily classes on faith-related topics and opportunities to assist community service organizations drew her into deeper reflection on her walk with God.

“Growing up in a Christian family, that’s something that I struggled with – how much is my faith my faith, versus that of my parents or grandparents?” she said. “The program really stretched me and helped me to define my faith in Christ.”

Bateman is the daughter of missionary parents, the Rev. Dr. Charles ’70 and Jean Taylor ’70 Van Engen, who worked in theological education in Chiapas, Mexico, and a granddaughter of Garcel and Ruth Van Engen, linking missionaries to Chiapas. When Bateman was in fourth grade, her family moved to Holland, and then relocated to Glendora, Calif., three years later. After graduating from high school, Bateman decided to pursue her interest in problem solving and computer software by pursuing a degree in computer science at Hope, while also earning minors in mathematics and Spanish. Although in high school she’d enjoyed tinkering with software programs, her first two years at Hope proved to be academically challenging. Nevertheless, she approached her course material with enthusiasm and perseverance, according to Dr. Mike Jipping, chair of the computer science department.

“I can remember her taking a great deal of leadership during team projects. When she was a senior, she organized a session on women in computing, inviting people from off-campus to participate, and she led it her whole session,” Dr. Jipping believes Bateman’s solid leadership skills were instrumental in helping her land a job as a software engineer at IBM shortly after she graduated from Hope. Five years ago, Bateman moved into the position of software architect. Currently, she provides technical leadership for an international team that develops projects for IBM’s marketing and sales teams, and for the company’s business partners. At work and in her spare time, Bateman remains committed to using the talents she possesses to serve others. Being triple Christian leaders in the community is not a choice, she maintains, but a responsibility to be taken seriously.

“When I’ve been blessed, I need to give back,” she said.