

Dickinson College

Serve the World



Nashville
January 2011

The floods in Nashville in May 2010 left 30 feet of water throughout the town in pockets all along the river. Houses were destroyed, people were left without electricity for a week, and still today garbage can be seen in the trees on the banks. But not many people knew about it. The flood hit at the same time the BP Oil Disaster and Time Square Bomber did; and another natural disaster did not register on the national news cycles. Yet over 30,000 homes were affected and many destroyed. FEMA gave each home \$30,000 to make the necessary repairs beyond insurance money, which hardly put a dent in what was needed by individuals to repair their homes.

January 15-22 2011 a group of 14 Dickinson students and 2 administrators traveled to Music City bringing hope and help to those in need. Our projects varied day to day and a two inch snow storm paralyzed the city on our final day. Our showers were in a trailer (until those pipes froze) and the sleeping trailer meant you heard everything your neighbors were doing. But the work we did and the project managers and homeowners we met, left an impression on everyone. Southern hospitality flourished from the people of First Lutheran Church in Lebanon, where we called home. Our project managers worked with a bunch of people new to construction work and had us building porches, hanging drywall, removing insulation and tiling floors before the week was over.

Thank you to everyone who took time to care and share the story of Nashville. In the land of country music our lives were brightened by those we met along the way. Read on to find out how.

Friday, January 14 2011

There is something about returning to Carlisle that always makes me excited. Maybe it's the idea of having a fresh start to a new semester. Or perhaps it's catching up with friends after the long break. However, my trip back to Dickinson this time around was characterized by my excitement surrounding our week in Nashville. There are so many unanswered questions that leave me anxious but eager. What work will be assigned? Will there even be enough work that we are able to assist with? What will our living quarters be? How will we all work and interact with one another? What will our relationship with the church be like? Although there is definite uncertainty with how this week will unfold, how we deal with this ambiguity is what will make this week a great one. Upon my arrival to the Vincent House today, I was excited to start getting to know all the members of the group. Serve the World is an excellent example of an opportunity to bring unique and beautiful people together. This was shown tonight in our dinner at Mira's, our Apples to Apples game, and our jokes about the Dickinson Club. Although I am not looking forward to our 5:30am wake up tomorrow, I am really excited to get down to Nashville and get situated. This is the beginning of a great and memorable experience.

Laura

In the days leading up the STW trip, I felt as though I was so busy and engaged in strategically planning for the spring semester with the Office of Campus Life that I did not have the opportunity to get excited for the Serve the World Nashville trip. It was not until pizza at Mira's House that I began having feelings of excited anxiety about our trip, mostly around the questions of how will the group get along throughout the week; how will they work and succeed as a team; and, how will they respond to me as a college administrator in a very new position at Dickinson? There are always those initial nerves that occur when meeting a group for the first time.

Rob

Spent some time at the house getting to know the team, played "Apples to Apples" which I can add to the list of card games at which I am horrible. Had a nice dinner/discussion at Mira's crib...Got rudely rejected along with the rest of the team from the elite and exclusive Dickinson Club, but changed our minds about the club when they offered us their leftovers. Team chemistry already seems really great, everyone seems excited and anxious to get on the road...trying to take things one step at a time, but I find myself looking forward to next week, hoping that we will be able to make a real difference in at least one person's life each day we are there.

Evan

So here we are. The drive down was quiet interesting. It was fun swapping stories and getting to know new people. The actual driving was very interesting. My standout experience would have to be Mary Beth's failed attempt to flip the van. Apparently, she felt the urge to make a 90 degree turn without even breaking. Fun times. We also learned that Taylor has an extreme fear of heights. I say extreme because even while driving she stopped breathing and turned red. Great stuff. I liked the fact that everyone was excited to get here and find out what we will be doing. We still have yet to share the details, but people are very anxious to find out. The trailers are nice. We (the guys) have the most spacious one. I like to think we have the master suite. The shower situation is hilarious. It's like a 12 step process to even set it up. I can't wait to see how this works during the week. Here we go!

Nathan Toews

Saturday January 15 2011

I'm in a church and I just lied about the date (Sorry, God) but I don't want to confuse future readers about what day of the trip I am writing about. For the record, it is Sunday Jan 16th, but for the purposes of this journal entry you are going to forget I said that. Yesterday started at the crack of dawn in the ATS parking lot as the team sleepily, yet excitedly piled into the vans to begin the long journey to Nashville. At least that's how I imagined it looked, since I was the last person to arrive to the parking lot. I had slept for maybe an hour and a half the night before and I figured I would pass out as soon as the van left the parking lot, but everyone in our van was buzzing with trip excitement. We got to see the sunrise over rural PA, and conversations ranged from Cher to favorite professors, and everyone had great group chemistry. The only source of anxiety for me was the looming responsibility of DRIVING the van. I have NO experience driving large vehicles and I really don't want to be responsible for ending the lives of half the team before we even get to TN. As it turns out, the only thing I was responsible for was some quickened heartbeats due to a slightly sharp turn that resulted in a brief shift of weight within the vehicle. After that, there were no more roadside incidents, and I was so relieved to get out of the driver's seat that I leaped for joy. I was really nervous about driving the van in the fast lane because a year ago I lost control of my car on the highway because I overcorrected when I started to go off the median in the fast lane, and my car spun around on the road-I'm talking a full 360 degree here and then rolled backwards into a ditch. Amazingly, the car and my mom and I were fine, but it always puts me on the edge when driving strange cars full of important people because I'm scared of losing control again. However, you have to face your fears sometime or another, and if the biggest obstacle of my day is driving, then life is pretty swell. When we got to our destination, we checked into the orphan train trailer hotel and were very pleased with our clean, if tight accommodations. The kitchen is huge and wonderful, and we have a nice hang out space to play apples to apples. If anyone can beat Ruby at that game, Ill bake them a cake. We have a shower trailer too. Too bad well never use it.

Mary Beth

Today we woke up bright and early around 5:30 in order to be on the road by 6 am. Surprisingly, we just about made that goal. I was expecting the ride to be boring and long, and to spend most of it sleeping. However, the trip turned out to be a lovely surprise. I had an amazing time looking at the changing scenery as we drove and talking about getting to know the other people. It was really cool to see the sunrise and to see the mountains slowly get bigger as we drove. We made really good time and did not hit any traffic. All the drivers did a good job too, and it was quite an experience to see some people drive. I think the high point was almost tipping the van over during an especially sharp turn. When we made it to Tennessee, it was a lot earlier than we expected. Outside is a church off the highway in Lebanon, about 40 minutes from Nashville. We are staying in tiny trailers, with bunk beds and barely enough room for three people. We have space heaters for heat and they actually do heat it up. It's cozy and will make me really appreciate my dorm room that I used to think was so small. Our room doesn't have a light but we're hoping it gets fixed. We're all really excited to go into Nashville and to finally see where we will be working all week.

Ruby

Sunday January 16 2011

Our first full day in Nashville was filled with lots of adventures. It started with an interesting church service where all the members were very welcoming. We then set out on a tour of Nashville to see the flooded areas. Like many of my peers, I was surprised to see how high the flood waters were. Our guide, J.P., pointed out areas that were totally under water. For example, the whole high-way overpass was flooded. However, while it was hard for me to imagine the damage caused by the flood, most of the area had already recovered. This is not to say that our help down here is not needed, but like many of the others in the group, I was expecting to see more visible flood damage. One of the first things I remember Mira saying at our meetings at school was that we may just be a fresh face for the people to tell their story. At first, this was hard for me to swallow. However, after seeing the damage, I more fully understand that even though it may not look like there is a lot of physical work to be done, just being there to hear their stories could really help them out. The highlight of the day for me came at the Blue Bird Café. The Blue Bird has great music and I ended up sitting next to a guy named "Trigger." Trigger was a veteran of the Navy with an un-kept beard and a worn out military jacket. When I first sat down next to Trigger, I did not think much about him. However, when the first band ended, I struck up conversation with Trigger. It turns out that Trigger had been listening to country music for a few years now. While most people listen to country music on the radio, Trigger explained that he listens to the actual writers of the music. Most country stars, like Keith Urban, etc. have others write their songs for them and they simply buy the song from the writer. In the end, the writer gets very little money compared to the performer. Therefore Trigger would rather listen to the actual people writing the songs, instead of the ones just singing them. Trigger made me think about the music industry and how it is a bureaucracy. All you hear about is the person who performs the song, not the people who actually write the song. Trigger also invited me to his birthday party to hear more music that was actually written by the people performing the songs. Even though I only talked to Trigger for a short period of time, I truly learned a lot. It just goes to show that you shouldn't judge a book by its cover, and that we can learn something from everyone.

Josh

Today began with a warm welcome from the congregation. We joined them in their Sunday morning church service. Many of the church members chatted with us and told us how happy they were that we were here. It was very easy to chat with the people. Many of them were musically talented and we learned that they often play bluegrass music at the

church. Shortly after church we headed into Nashville. The Country Music Hall of Fame opened everyone's eyes, and ears, to the history of country music. Most of us felt a new appreciation for this music genre by the end of the day. Next, we met two Dickinson alumni who took us on a flood tour. They provided many stories and images to help describe the flooding and what occurred in that area this past summer. Afterwards, we headed back into the city for a famous Nashville dinner at the Bluebird Café. We all packed into the small restaurant and watched fantastic entertainment and ate amazing food. We all enjoyed our new found love of country music. The car ride home and the night reflection were filled with excitement from all our adventures that day. What a great introduction to Nashville.

Taylor

Today was such a great day. I'm officially in love with Nashville. The culture of this place is overwhelming, but in a good way. It's too bad we can't spend more time here.

The flood tour was eye opening, but at the same time, I don't know what I expected to see. It's still so hard for me to imagine how devastating the flood was. It's amazing how much repair has been done since May. But I know that the area that we saw was nothing compared to the overall affected area.

Regardless, I still feel for the people of Nashville. The fact that FEMA only gave each affected family \$30,000 and that wasn't even enough to fix their homes really hit me hard. I just hope that the work we do this week helps to lessen the load on some families and to make at least some kind of impact.

Tori Eberle

Monday January 17 2011

Today was our first day of work! We went to our first site, but the owner was nowhere to be found. We did manage to scare a woman in the house and frighten some neighbors. We changed locations and went to a man's house. Mr. Smith lived off of a highway and he asked us to clean out his crawl space and his air conditioning unit. As we began to work he began to tell us his stories. To our surprise he was a car restoration expert and worked on a bunch of country singer's cars. He even restored the car in the museum we saw yesterday. He was super enthusiastic about his cars and gave us a tour of his shop. He seemed very grateful for our help though he said he felt bad accepting it. He said that he knew people were in more need than him so he was unsure about whether he should accept our help. He was a really awesome host and tomorrow we're helping him put up drywall in his shop. Tis all for now.

Jordan

Today Leah's group woke up and made breakfast for everyone. After breakfast the groups split up and went to their respective worksites. As part of Leah's group we headed about 40 miles away to a woman named Rhonda's house. Upon arrival Rhonda was nowhere to be found. Since we arrived 30 minutes early we decided to use the time to drive around the neighborhood. The area seemed to be home to a lower class community with perhaps some immigrants. What was interesting to see the contrast between this neighborhood and the neighborhood that JP and Jan showed us yesterday.

We return to Rhonda's and still found no answer at the odor. Eventually a young woman appeared and seemed confused as to what to do. She said Rhonda was down the street. We waiting a half hour and finally got in touch with

Rhonda and she told us to come back later in the week. After hearing this we decided to move on to another site for the time being.

We drove about 50 minutes to our next location and met Mr. Smith who was very friendly and welcoming. He explained that we would be clearing out insulation in a crawl space under his home and replacing it with new insulation. He also asked that we work on his air conditioning unit and then help put up some drywall. Taylor was the first to test out the small window that went into the crawl space. She exited really quickly after seeing the damage and Evan entered. At this point Evan, Henry and Rob donned face masks and headed in to start ripping out old insulation and keeping insulation that was in good shape. Needless to say, it was a dirty job and we felt a little claustrophobic at times. After breaking for lunch we continued to work in the crawl space and made significant progress in the afternoon removing almost all the old insulation from half the house. While the guys worked under the house, the girls cleaned the air conditioner and did some painting inside. Both worked very hard.

The best part of the day was hearing all about Mr. Smith's story regarding his cars. For over 20 years he has been restoring classic cars, some of which have gone on to sell for over \$60,000. Mr. Smith seemed to really enjoy our company and was a very welcoming individual. Although we don't discriminate our team felt, especially good about doing such hard work for an individual who was extremely likeable and helpful. He was also very humble and indeed repeatedly that there were many people who were in greater need than he. He seemed so thankful for all the help we and the other community groups had given him and said that he would be a volunteer for the rest of his life.

Overall it was a productive but tiring day. I look forward to enjoying green bean casserole cooked by Nathan's team tonight and then maybe some games, Trigger's birthday party (just joshing) and some prime shut eye.

Peace and love, Henry McCorkle

Well I left my journal writing for the next morning so I really am going to write about Monday. A good way to start is by saying how while I was making my breakfast, and I'm spreading cream cheese on my mini bagel, I start thinking about my team and Tom trying to get the mud concrete on the bricks right and I'm like really? Did this really happen? Has Tom and his construction tips been stuck in my head this much? I couldn't help but laugh. And I think that sums up Monday perfectly.

Monday morning, I couldn't have been more excited. I'm an optimistic person so I know that our porches can be done, only thing holding us up now is the weather. Our project manager, Tom is really great. I just look forward to working with him so much. I love my new nickname of course (Belle for Belgium) He was really interested in teaching me how to use the power tools and making our tasks as easy as possible for us. Last night's reflection made me think a lot. About the other teams homeowners racial comments and how I felt about them myself. I would be very bothered as well and I understand that whole thing about being in his home and maybe him not knowing better. HOWEVER, I was thinking as a citizen of a global community with the privilege of being a part of a diverse community isn't it our task to maybe spread our knowledge in these kind of places. I'm not saying to immediately attack him after his comments, but maybe after that relationship is built like Mira mentioned and make our knowledge ... practical (like the pastor said).

Just a thought, Belle (aka Brussels)

Being a first generation born "American" and having grown up in a low-income community where economic necessity is widespread, there is a lack of proper education and gang violence prevails, has greatly impacted my view on life. I feel extremely fortunate and am therefore very grateful and appreciative of the opportunities that have been presented to

me. This is a major reason of why service is important to me. I feel the urge, the need, the yearn, to give back. I think it is so important to demonstrate to the youth of my community, or others of similar circumstances, that it is possible, that I was once in their situation.

My Dickinson education has provided me with the knowledge and the skills necessary to not only “survive” and make something of myself but to attempt to leave an impactful mark or positively change someone’s life, make a difference. I believe service is an act of selflessness in which you gain a consciousness of compassion. The yearn to touch someone’s life. There is another aspect of service that I’ve come to discover as a result of going on this trip and it has to do with the memories you create and the bonds/relationships you form. It is through service trips like these that you get to meet a great variety of pretty awesome people of diverse backgrounds and interests. The experiences that you undergo when giving back are what not only impact your perspective of life but also touch you in unexplainable manner. I am very grateful and happy!

Leslie Mendoza

Tuesday January 18 2011

Today started out a bit slow as the rain delayed our team and finding a new project took a while. Eventually we went to Walker’s house and learned to hang dry wall. It was an adventure! With most people learning for the first time-it took a bit longer but we got the hang of it. My favorite part of today was sitting in the room “working” and watching the team interact. This team, from all over parts of campus, has really jelled well. Seeing them sit and play games for hours reminds me of how people with a common purpose get along. Without TV or internet the group really is forced to play games, hang out, and just get to know each other. Also in reflection we talked about how service connected with everyone’s major. It was very encouraging to see the connections-both obvious and creative of all the ways events, ideals, values, etc. connect to what people learn in the classroom. This STW team has really looked for and seen these connections. From learning about history of the area, ethnography, and sociology to geography, I have really been encouraged by these connections. Nashville had been a great opportunity to learn about the area, see the miles of devastation touched by the flood, and the response of people all over the nation.

Mira

This morning the weather was dreadful and all I could think about was that crawl space my team and I were determined to conquer. Yesterday I wasn’t able to get down there and lend a hand so I was a little apprehensive to finally get inside. It’s incredible to see how quickly the team has bonded and how invested and willing everyone is. As soon as we pulled up to Jeff’s house, we split up and got to work. Taylor, Evan and I crawled our way through the mud and into the dark abyss. At first, I struggled being in such an enclosed space, but I kept trucking and made my way all the way to the back of the space. I worked quickly, using my best judgment to rip-cut old insulation that was not useful anymore and to push it back to the opening of the crawl space. We worked diligently to install the new insulation where we ripped out the old and Henry, MB, and Rob were itching to get down there. After about an hour, we switched and went to help Jeff in his garage with more insulation and drywall. I was more excited because I knew how much his garage meant to him. I got to hammer a few nails, pack insulation into walls, use the staple gun (YES!) and measure and cut drywall to hang. I knew Jeff was so appreciative of our help and it felt great just to listen to everything he had to say. At one point, Jeff had to leave to go to work and his father, Larry, filled in. It was obvious that they were father and son- they looked alike and their mannerisms were so similar. It wasn’t until Larry came that I saw how the flood affected Jeff on a more emotional level. Jeff kept talking about the physical damage that the flood caused to his land and house; however, his

father put it in a different perspective. Larry explained to me how his son was down for months after his garage was ruined- so much so that he couldn't come to his own sanctuary because it upset him too much. His passion suffered severely and in turn affected him so negatively. Knowing this made the work we were doing more real to me. It's strange- I keep comparing the flood in Nashville to NOLA. In NOLA, hearing the home owner's story is a huge part of the experience. Facts and statistics like water levels and the number of homes destroyed are helpful, but when you hear it from a more personal level, your perspective changes.

I'm excited to finish out the week. This STW team is definitely one of the best and everyone gets along incredibly well. Each individual has their own quirks and personalities and is constantly entertaining. I can't wait to get back to Dickinson and see everyone around campus. Until Saturday, Journal, keep it real.

Leah

P.S. Team Leah Rules

Wednesday January 19 2011

Today was a good day, got to the work site early, and the homeowner(s) had plenty of work for us to do. We cleared the backyard of debris, and the final result was so satisfying that I regret not taking a before and after quick picture. We then moved inside the house where we started to tile the basement (most of us for the first time). It was a messy but fun job, and I really enjoyed learning something new. The best part of this job for me was that our team was all together in the same space, and, as it turns out, we work extremely well as a unit. Leah and Michelle's guidance were very crucial in the rest of us getting the hang of tiling, and getting the work done so quickly. What I liked about our projects today was that we set objectives for ourselves and worked until we accomplished them. I always find it more satisfying and easier to concentrate if I am working towards something that I know I could finish. It was a pretty eventful ride home, as we listened to DJ McCormick and determined the animal counterparts of our human teammates (Rob- Velocira ptos, Leah-cat, Henry -Giraffe, Jordan-bunny, Michelle-blue heron, Taylor-hummingbird, MBK-Hyena-sorry ☺)

Evan

My team, Team Fox that is, has now put up a nearly completed porch. We worked and did as much as we could and are waiting on Tom and Steve to figure out the door situation. The porch is too high for the door to open. Not our fault. I made a new friend at our worksite. He is a small bulldog and he rocks. He was a bit shy at first, but it didn't take long for him to be jumping and running with me. It is sad, however, because I think the owner beats him. Maybe I will steal him. So, back to the worksite.... Today was very cold. I believe it hovered around 26-ish degrees, including snow now and then wind... and we were out in it all day. It was glorious. Now I can say I've built a porch in snowy, sub-freezing weather. There, I did it. I was completely in my element. My team was really cold and voiced it now and then, but no one really complained or was upset or let it affect their work. It was awesome to see everyone tough it out while having fun and doing great work. I just hope my enthusiasm for the harsh working conditions didn't upset anyone. I was shooting for motivation. Romo and I were partnered up for a long portion of the day. We were cutting banisters with the table saw. We work very well together, actually. We are usually on the same page in general. Power tools are always fun, even more so when you do a good job, which we did. Today was also great because I felt that Tom and Steve really felt comfortable with us for the first time. Steve is "the man" and can probably do anything. Tom gets frustrated sometimes, but loves to joke and motivate people. Every step we take towards a completed porch is usually followed by a "that's much better" from Tom. Great Stuff.

Tonight we had a potluck at the church. The food was amazing, all of it. I have no idea what some of it was but it didn't matter. I'm pretty sure I had about three plates as well as some brownies. I was shocked by the tastiness of the homemade hot-pockets (McCorkle's idea) and the hamburger helper (my idea). Evan and I decided that if we learned how to make those, plus the amazing cornbread, that we were set for life.

The weather forecast is calling for more snow tomorrow, but I think we'll get a lot done anyhow. Team Fox will have a useable porch built by tomorrow. So this is me signing off. Can't wait to see what happens from here on out.

El captain of Team Fox (Nathan)

Love you guys

It's only Wednesday, but I feel like so much has happened this week. The work we have been doing has been a personal challenge for me...but also really fun. The drilling, the hanging of drywall and especially the mud shoveling have been hard tasks for me to complete as well as difficult skills for me to develop.

But my team is so supportive and everyone that we have met has been so hospitable and so grateful, it reminds me that despite my few real struggles with construction work, there really is so much more that I am physically able to accomplish makes a real difference to some people's lives.

I wish that I would have gotten into service earlier and that my own physical and skill limitations didn't hold me back from helping more people right now.

I'm just so inspired by the people that surround me on this trip and in this service group. I really want these connections to last.

The people of Nashville deserve so much more than even the important help that they have been given. I only wish that we could do even more. The little bit we've done is important, but this trip really has shown me that there is always another person who needs help. It just further supports my belief that there really are so many in need right here in the United States. Sorry for the rambling.

Tori

Wednesday – the day Brussel's cried at reflection

Today has been an emotional roller coaster for me. I feel like I have so much to say that I don't wanna write about anything. But I will because I know Mira (pronounced me-ra) would like me to. So as I said at reflection (attempted to say) this morning was a very difficult one. I woke up after thinking about my family all night and called them and really missed them. After watching the video of what happened, I starting thinking about how my house catching on fire would of felt and it really gave me a perspective of the people of Nashville who lost their homes. Regardless I still had this guilty feeling of being away from my family. I felt like I should be home helping my own family, instead of here in Nashville. But after being at our site for a while and with the help of my team and Tom, and my boyfriend who I was texting and was encouraging me to continue doing what I love to do (help others) I was able to set my homesickness aside and get to work. I didn't exactly put it aside, I was just able to realize that my family was okay and I was here for a reason. Regardless of the cold, me and my team were able to do as much as we could. The set back with the porch being slightly too high to open the door did upset me because I was so sure we would finish it but as Nathan helped me understand things like that happen all the time and as long as you do your best you have succeeded. So much has

happened in just five days. These trips are really mind blowing, and since I am fortunately just a freshman I plan on attending many many more. So booyah senior ol' heads. JK it's all out of love. I am blessed to have met so many great people and it is a shame so many will be leaving me. But I wish both of us the best of luck.

Lots of love, Belle (Brussels for those who still haven't gotten the note)

Thursday January 20 2011

The past 72 hours have been incredibly reflective for me - in thinking about service in my conversations with team members at the work site and congregation members at the potluck dinner and finally watching team members grapple with incredibly difficult social questions at reflection.

Why service? This has been in my thoughts a lot lately, especially regarding my own journey with community service. Throughout high school, I helped train elementary school students for the Special Olympics and worked at camps for developmentally disabled people. For me, this work was something that I HAD to get involved in rather than something that I was interested in. I was born with a form of cerebral palsy, a very mild form, which affects my day to day, but does not inhibit me from life—it just makes me rethink how to accomplish certain tasks. I am incredibly lucky and blessed, and I have always known this, but my disability and luck has given me a sense of responsibility to assist the disabled community (which I need to reconnect with). Reflection and my conversation with Pastor Jim have been the cause of the cognitive dissonance for me and the realization that I need to re-allocate my time to find a weekly/biweekly disabilities related service opportunity in Harrisburg.

Furthermore, although I'm incredibly tired, I'm continually re-energized by the conversations at reflection and with teammates. We have had some awesome dialogue about lifestyles, passions, social issues, interests, etc. during the work day and at night – it's been an absolute pleasure and I'm thankful to be talking with Dickinson students about everything and anything – definitely reaffirmed for me my faith in the incredible potential and capacity of Dickinson students and has made me extremely excited and reenergized for the spring semester.

Finally, I'm real proud of team Leah and the attitude and vigor with which they have approached their work this week. We have been incredibly successful and productive at both Jeff's and Courtney's house. I guess the word to sum up my current thoughts and emotions: fulfillment.

I'm done musing and waxing philosophically, Rob

This past week has been very rewarding and most definitely the most productive week I've had all break. While other Dickinsonians are chilling at home, going out in the city – we've been connecting with some pretty great "Nashvillians". As a team, we've really managed to work well together.

I'm going to miss our van rides to work sites and all the fun we had passing the invisible ball around and grooving to tunes on the radio. And as Tori said at our reflection, it's been nice to have people trust you with power tools and important projects – letting us into their home and community.

It's unfortunate we experienced some uncomfortable dialogue, but that just reaffirms that much change and understanding is still needed of other cultures. Even though geographically I'm closer to home, I feel more familiarity and diversity in Carlisle. Despite these differences, I've learned that those are not reasons to deny people the help they are in need of. This experience will be just as rewarding as the next.

I hope Nashville and other families receive the help they still need and I hope we can all remain close when we go back to Dickinson. It would be nice to all hang out again.

Hopefully the roads are not too bad on Saturday.

Michelle

Today is a "snow day" since all our worksites and contractors are out in the boonies and don't know what to do with a couple of inches of snow, which means both our teams got to sleep in this morning – whoo-hooo!! It also leaves me with some time to reflect on my favorite day of this trip thus far – Thursday. Our worksite was at a lady's house who had her whole basement flooded and needed to have everything reconstructed. A team before us took care of the architecture, so our job was to tile the floors and paint primer on the walls. The great thing about these jobs is that you can visually see the progress you're making very quickly. When we were working in the crawl space, it was hard to see how much we had accomplished because a) you could only see like 5 feet in front of you and b) you couldn't tell which rafters were finished unless you were underneath each one. Tiling is much more visually rewarding, even if some of our rows started out crooked.

Thursday was our second day of tiling and our first day of painting, and excuse my language but our team hauled a**. We painted a wall in less than fifteen minutes. We got about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the tiling done, and we painted everything we were supposed to even though we painted 3 walls the wrong color first. That day really opened up my eyes to the power of teamwork. Here we are, a motley crew with not many home improvement skills, completing something in a day that would normally have taken a week or more. You don't have to be a professional to get the job done, and working can be a really good time. Some "cute" moments of Team Leah from Thursday: singing to boy bands and having Henry outed as a child model/secret member of N'SNYC; Rob's abstract painting on the wall, destroying Evan in a paint fight; playing Ninja; taking goofy pictures, and watching Jordan and Evan play with Dalton, our homeowners six year old son. He gave us all stinky beans as a token of gratitude. Our team works so well together – we're like scrambled eggs and hot sauce (with ketchup) – we're a perfect fit. I'm going to miss exchanging bad – I mean witty jokes- with Michelle in the car and the overall ridiculousness that is Team Leah. I can't believe the trip is winding to a close, and a part of me is sad because I know that everyone on our Serve the World team will be getting back to their busy schedules at Dickinson and we won't see each other as much or in the same context and environment. There must be many Nashville reunions to keep the country spirit that this trip has evoked in me alive.

I know I'm writing too much again, but I just have to say the mega dance party last night was truly epic. People were grooving and cooking and making fools out of themselves and it was fantastic. A Dickinson dance party is in order since Leslie was nowhere to be found for this one. I think dancing is one of those things that shows how comfortable you are around people – and since everyone was shaking their tail feathers – I guess everyone is at ease with each other. A part of me is still amazed that we all aren't sick of each other yet, but then I think about how our common thread is that we all want to help others and then I'm not surprised at all. Since I'm currently sinking into slumber on the couch, I'm going to end this disjointed journal entry.

Mary Beth

Friday January 21 2011

Today we woke up to a great deal of uncertainty. Since Tennessee experienced one inch of snow last night, the entire area shut down and we were concerned that we would not be able to get to our worksites today. We spent most of the

morning playing games, especially 500 (300), Rummy! and Catchphrase (the buzzer is getting very annoying). We also “feasted” on tortilla chips and were generally unproductive. After eating leftovers for lunch we learned that we would not be returning to our respective worksites. We soon learned that, instead of working in the afternoon, we would be seeing “Country Strong” at a local cinema.

Even though Leah wanted to see “True Grit” (again) we all ended up going to theater three for “Country Strong.” The movie started thirty minutes late which was a bad omen. The movie itself was enjoyable and had many layers to it. Tim McGraw played a despicable character and Gwyneth Paltrow was generally annoying and was too melodramatic for my taste. Fortunately the two younger actors stole the show and gave it a ray of hope. Jordan Haferbier described the movie as “contrived yet wonderful.” Mary Beth Kinman loved the eye candy that “Beau” provided and Taylor Wilmot said that the storyline was “heartfelt.” Clearly it was an enjoyable experience for all.

After the movie, we returned to the church. Nathan’s team began cooking dinner, while Leah’s team began to clean out the church. Hopefully tonight we will have a great reflection and more fun games will be played before we depart this city.

Overall I felt that we had a productive week. Even though neither group finished their projects, both groups seemed to feel like they did some good this week. My biggest positives this week were getting to know the other students on this trip and also getting to meet some of the residents of Nashville. The members of the Faith Lutheran Church were wonderful and the potluck dinner that they put on for us was probably the highlight of my week. I had heard about “Southern Hospitality” but hadn’t experienced it personally until this trip. I was not disappointed.

Until next time Nashville... until next time

Henry McCorkle

Thursday was a great day. It started out with us building more of the porch. We added steps and started to put up some of the railing. It is awesome to see that all of our hard work is paying off. However, because of the snow, we could not go back and finish the porch. It is annoying that we will not be able to finish what we started. At the start of the week our team was saying that we could build both porches within the week. However, as it turned out, we could not even finish one. This just shows that construction projects always take much longer than you think they will. Running into problems is always part of constructing things and even though they were frustrating, our team pushed through them and found solutions (even if the solutions was totally picking up the whole porch).

Throughout the week I have really been reflecting on the generosity of Tom and Steven (our team contractors). They truly brought a fun atmosphere to the work place and I enjoyed working with them. Even though I only worked with them for a week, I feel like all of us chilled with them. For example, Steven brought us bread and cookies today. These two men are taking valuable time out of their lives to help people who they do not even know. Whether they are driven by religion, the desire to help, or some other reason, these two men truly deserve praise. This trip has given me the opportunity to meet some truly genuine people like Tom and Steven. I think they can be examples for us all as we move on from this trip.

Josh

WOW! It is already Friday, our last day... this week has been a short, jam-packed, exciting, interesting and always surprising trip. I cannot believe how close I feel to everyone on this wonderful trip to Tennessee and how much I have

learned. I can now say that I am able to drywall, build a porch, take apart a porch, drill, hammer, and dig. Not to mention pulling through freezing temperatures and snow. Everyone is so stalwart and helpful. Today was both disappointing and relaxing. We were not able to do work or go to any sites due to the mild snowstorm that Nashville experienced last night. It was unfortunate that Team Nathan (aka Team Fox) was not able to finish the porch completely, but we did get a lot of work done. I hope the next team that continues our work knows how much we did. We got to sleep in this morning which was amazing after the 6:50 wake-ups all week. Our day consisted of people reading, napping, eating, and playing the many games that we have been enjoying all week. As a special treat, we went to the movie theater to see Country Strong. It was a good way to end the trip as it was a tribute to country music, which I have been actually enjoying lately, and to the city of Nashville. I am going to miss all this time I've had with this lovely group of people that I am lucky enough to go to school with, the special people I met from the congregation here, our new friends named Tom and Steve. Tom and Steve are two people that I never would have met and who have surprised me this week with their selflessness and kindness. The congregation here has also been so welcoming and truly grateful for our just being here and helping out. I am so glad that I decided to come to Nashville and I have had a very special and unique time.

Ruby

Who would have thought I traveled all the way to Tennessee from Connecticut to encounter more snow? Unfortunately, the inclement weather caused us to cancel our work today. I have to admit that I was disappointed that Team Nathan was unable to finish up the porch we had worked on all week. It's funny how attached you can get to something you've built with your own hands and hard work. However, I was happy that there was closure to the work week when our team took the photo with Tom and Steven yesterday. Giving them their gifts and saying goodbye made this day of idleness much more bearable. One definite upside to today was the opportunity for both teams to spend time together. Being at different sites during the week has given both teams unique experiences so it was nice to end the trip with a day that all sixteen of us could share. I had a great time playing Rummy 500 (or 300 I should say) with Rob, Ruby, Henry, and Josh. It was also enjoyed seeing Country Strong in the afternoon. After the film, my team came back and made chili for dinner and s'mores for dessert. Of course the night was ended with reflections, games, and one final game of Mafia. I formally apologize for any of the gruesome deaths I may have put you people through as narrator. We are leaving Nashville tomorrow at 6AM. I wish I could have more time to explore this beautiful city. Regardless of whether or not I make it back in my lifetime, it will forever be characterized by its rich culture, caring community, and wonderful people.

Laura Romano

Saturday, January 22 2010

Our van trip back to Carlisle went by so quickly. I think everyone was anxious to get back to Dickinson. We were all ready for real showers and our own beds. At the same time, the thought of leaving this amazing group of people was emotional and so bittersweet. During the van ride I thought about how far we have come since our first van trip. We all worked together to participate in flood relief, played countless games, cooked meals, reflected, and listened to so much country music!

I feel so lucky to have so many fond memories of everyone in Nashville and to be able to continue creating memories throughout the spring semester. It is exciting to think about how this one week service trip is going to affect our spring semester. I believe what we experienced in Nashville will resonate throughout our semester and hopefully further into the future. Thank you everyone for such memorable week.

Love, Taylor

On our drive home, between sleeping and driving, it was great to have time to review and think back over our week. One night in reflection, someone mentioned about being one of the Faceless People. As we came to Nashville, and in many ways even while we were there, we were among the Faceless People that you know are around but never meet. Trips challenge me to remember those people: to remember those who are reaching out, even when the conditions might not be ideal; to remember the people that volunteer without asking for anything in return; to remember the people who are going through difficult times and just can't make it on their own; to remember the people volunteering all their time and energy, and paying for themselves so that others may be helped. Those people may be faceless, as I surely don't remember those I have met and worked with on every service trip, but their stories are the ones that stick with me. And I think that is what I hope for those that met us this week. That they remember not our names, but that a group of college students came and cared that they were in need in the cold month of January. My hope is that they remember college students went beyond their comfort zones to build a porch in the snow, take insulation out from under a house, paint a room brown (and then white!), and lay tiles that aren't perfect, but close. And even if we left our homeowners and project coordinators and people we met with nothing else, that the faceless people remind themselves and others that other people care. Service trips can be so complex, but someone cares and someone is bringing hope is one of the greatest gifts any of us can ever give.

Mira