

# Dickinson College

## Alternative Spring Break Tohono O'Odham Nation

March 12-19<sup>th</sup> 2011

### Team Journal



Saturday, March 12, 2011

#### **Nadien K. D Arcangelo**

It's the first night in the trip and so far I am enjoying every minute of it. I hadn't actually felt the excitement until I started packing, which is probably why I forgot a few things. When we were flying over the desert on our way into Arizona I had an almost welcoming feeling. And, I know I keep mentioning how it's always been a dream of mine to just visit a Native American reservation, didn't matter which one, I am glad I'm getting a chance to do it with the people that are on this trip with me. I didn't realize how close we would all get on just the first day. I think the meetings prior to this really did benefit us so that interaction with one another is what makes this trip all the more worth it. I am also looking forward to working with my peers during our projects and services around the town. Visiting the pow-wow also had a very strong impact on me because I got to see traditional outfits and drum beating. The dances were a little less enthusiastic than I thought they would be, but still very pleasing. I did cry during the performance, not because of my dream to witness something of the sort, but because of the pride I saw in their faces for their nations and traditions. It was beautiful hearing the songs in their native language from all the different nations from in and out of the area. Last but not least, the stars at night are also going to be hard to part with at the end of the week because they are absolutely gorgeous out here.

#### **Steven Seland**

What is there for me to even say about this trip? It's hard for me to put into words everything that I've been feeling and experiencing in the past few weeks knowing that this will be my last time on this trip. I have come to love this place and the people I have had the

opportunity to get to know while being here and it will be a huge part of me missing since I do not know the next time I will be back.

Having said that, I will highlight the main points of the first day here. The journey here was definitely long and exhausting, but upon arrival in Tucson and the sign of the AZ desert it was all immediately worth it. We decided to visit the San Xavier Mission church and it was even better because there was a Pow-wow going on. I was a little disappointed we couldn't go in the church because there was mass going on but the outside was beautiful and I enjoyed the Pow-wow festivities- especially the fry bread!

After leaving, we went food shopping and had a long ride to Pisin Mo'O- because the GPS told us the wrong way! Once we finally got there it was already night time, but upon arrival we all got out of our vans and immediately noticed the beautiful stay with all of the stars shining brightly! It was exciting to see the team's reaction at their surroundings and I am looking forward to everyone's reactions to the trip and sharing new experiences.

After meeting quickly we got settled in the recreation center, ate dinner and promptly fell asleep-excited for what the week holds for us.

### **Elizabeth Austen**

I guess all I can say is wow! The past 24 hours have been insane! I won't lie; the traveling was exhausting and stressful but so worth it. When we first landed in Tucson my first impression was that it looked like Wiley Coyote had come to life. But after the initial shock and awe I realized how beautiful this place is. The mountains are massive, dwarfing anyone I'd seen before. The whole landscape is so interesting because it's so different from anything I've ever seen. And the sunsets are spectacular, especially when the sun is encircled in a rainbow. I think Matt got some pictures.

Enough about the landscape, I should also mention the mission; yet another awesome experience. I was interested in the architecture and history; however I was drawn more towards the pow-wow. There is something really powerful and touching about watching the group of kids come up and address the crowd in their native language. I thought all of the dancers' costumes were beautiful. They were all so elaborate and intricate and brightly colored. I honestly could have sat there for hours. I was disappointed when we had to leave after the opening ceremonies. I forgot to mention the drummers and singers. The songs were very different than anything I normally hear on the radios or on my iPod, but I still loved them. I only wish we could've stayed longer.

The drive out to the recreation center took an extra hour because the GPS took us 30 miles in the opposite direction. This meant we arrived in the dark which was good and bad. I wanted to see everything then but it was a nice surprise in the morning when we woke up. That being said, I think I've missed breakfast so I will pass this off to the next person.

## **Sunday March 13<sup>th</sup>**

### **Sun**

Today was memorable. I came to this trip expecting to learn different cultures and perhaps hoping that this trip would change my life. It already has changed my life. I start to look at things in different perspectives. For instance, today we took a field trip to other parts of the reservation. The view of the desert was amazing and something that I have never seen in my life. We hiked up to a small hill and the scenery just cleared my mind. Also we stopped by a hole in the desert. Samuel stopped his car right next to a hole. Then the sign on the hole shocked my mind. The sign reads “If you need help push the red button. Rescue personnel will arrive shortly to help you. Do not leave this area.” Samuel told us that this area is one of the passing points for the immigrants from Mexico. He also added that people actually push the button and police come, book their names and send them back to Mexico. It freaked me out because those people who pushed the button must have been in a serious condition. They know what will happen if they pushed it, but they had to push it. This is just horrible. As one of my many expectations for this trip, I was expecting to learn about the border issue in the Border States. But when I actually faced the reality, it is terrible and sad what the immigrants have to go through. They risk their “life” to cross the border hoping to catch the American Dream and they have to stop even before they could even grab a chance to win the fortune. My life is a way more lucky than those immigrants that usually get treated like animals. It’s just not right.

Another thing was when we stopped by a water hole place that the reservation wants a system so they could hold and keep water. They still don’t have an engineer or a perfect system to build it. I was thinking if I were a genius engineer then I would be willing to build a new system for them. I could be useful to the people and I would feel like my life is meaningful. What I’m trying to say here is that I need to invest in myself more and more so one day I can be helpful to others with my knowledge. Now I have a meaningful goal in my life and I’m excited to see what would happen in the future of my life.

### **Oanh- Nhi**

Today was an adventure to its finest. We met Samuel and Linda in the morning. One of the things that struck me the most was when Linda told us that there was an incident at one of the schools where 14 students were caught cutting. It really shocked me how prevalent cutting was amongst kids in the nation. After the talk, we went on a “field trip” where we were at an abandoned village and went sight-seeing. The scenery was beautiful. I felt so grateful to be able to see it with my own eyes. Later on, I also was able to go on Samuel’s truck... the sunset was amazing! When we got back to the camp, I finally got to meet the kids. One of the kids told me that he was Zyion. He told me a little about his sister and has this shy but adorable smile. I was eating a Cliff bar and he asked me for one. When we played baseball, I was cheering with the kids and they seemed to be having a lot of fun. When Zyion made a homerun he sat next to me out of breath-looked at me and said “What was in that bar!?” The kids were so adorable and

loving. I have worked in daycares and camps and the things that all the kids have in common is the want and need for love.

### **Monday March 14<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Matt**

Today was exhilarating and exhausting and fulfilled all my reasons for wanting to come on this trip: to serve the O'Oldham community, to live in a beautiful wilderness and to experience and learn about the O'Odham culture. After breakfast, I was assigned the choir of cleaning all the windows in the Rec center. I would otherwise have been a momentous task but Nadien and I enjoyed each other's company while working. Although it was a simple task, I still felt that I was being of some use to the people here. After cleaning I played tag with the kids and I think they love having us as well. One little boy, Tyler always tries to tickle my neck, massage my shoulders when he sees me, and then expects the same in return. After playing some intense tag and red-light green-light we headed to Sells. Our first stop was a traditional foods restaurant that served O'Odham food from the desert. This was quite possibly the best enchilada ever. We then headed to the Cultural Museum, which was recently built to preserve the O'Odham culture and to educate people about it. The culture curator, Reverend, gave us a lecture was both fascinating and reasoning because it focused on not only the challenges fears the nation, but also the aspects of the culture that make it rich, and worth prescribing. We learned of their values, religion, their deep respect for nature, their food (which we ate for lunch earlier and I can testify to being delicious) and language. Hearing the lecture reasoned to one that the traditional ways are not lost entirely. That being said, it is hard to see the apprehension in the elders as they received a grant challenge in passing the old ways to the younger generations. Finally, I love standing in the desert and gazing across the wild open spaces. It makes me so happy that this unspoiled wilderness still excites and hopes it always will.

#### **Susannah Bartlaw**

Just sat down for a break from kickball with the kids. It's so stunning standing in the sun.

(Break for a trip around the village)

Just had a tour of the village with Linda – she was letting folks know about the solar & gardening workshop. I'm getting cold sitting out here but I want to commit to the journal! Ok. Since I just got back from the tour of the village – it's so shocking, though it shouldn't be, to see the poverty in the village. I like to think I am a knowledgeable person but the truth is that my daily life is very sheltered. So with trash ditches in dirt roads and roofs falling apart I am truly taken aback – all with a stunning sunset in the background.

But then I think of that “pivot the center” thing – the riches I saw in the relationships Linda had with folks we visited; and what I know even from my life too – that no amount of material can replace or create what makes life lovely and interesting. But that people are disenfranchised from having material comfort that at least would make it better and less tough. People are struggling for survival and being batted down by the system.

I get stuck as a victim of powerful language – but that's not the point. It makes me angry, full of respect and excited to continue relationships so I can speak from a place of knowledge... blah blah blah!

People should come first that's all. I hope there is sausage and/or bacon.

P.S. I am so excited about the meeting tomorrow!

### **Julia Hanson**

Today was a lot to take in, and after our discussions at dinner it's clear I'm not the only one who feels that way. The cultural museum was amazing and people had a lot to say about it tonight, but what really snuck out for me today was the kids. Knowing what they are up against is hard when you're talking to them. I've really ever dealt with upper middle class white kids from healthy, happy families. That's something I keep going back to because it's really hard to ignore the feelings of sympathy, confusion or even desperation to make a difference for them. It's definitely overwhelming, but these kids seem so resilient and amazing. They are able to see the pleasure and the humor in the little things despite the problems at home or in their nation that they are dealing with. It is also hard, though, hearing Bernard and Joe talk about what the O'odham are up against... things the kids don't even know about yet! It really makes me feel like I grew up in a bubble. Susannah, Steve and I also had an interesting talk in the car about a number of different issues one. One thing we talked about was how we were growing up, going to college, getting jobs, being financially secure, seeing the world, getting the most of life, achieving everything you ever wanted, etc. We were encouraged and expected to so that is the norm for me, whereas here, because of circumstances beyond these people's control, that is not the norm and it is not that easy. At this point in the trip, I am just confused to how to make a lasting impression on these kids as opposed to just being in their lives for a few days. I don't know! I hope I figure that out.

### **Emily Eckardt**

After reflections today I think the group consensus is that today was an all around great day. Although I feel like we are still settling into Pisinemo, I know it really hit me today that even without a strict schedule of designated tasks, I have so much to learn from the O'odham and just the time alone that we spend with the kids is worth it.

The kids were so welcoming of us today and definitely started opening up compared to their shy demeanor yesterday. It is easy to tell already how eager for attention they are. While the attention seeking is not so different from the kids I know from home, the O'odham kids seem more surprised and appreciative of our time. A group of them each seemed quite distraught when we left for the café and museum. It made me sad that as much as we told the kids that we would return in a few hours, they seemed very hesitant in believing we would be back.

The café was obviously delicious but it was our visit at the museum that really shook me up. I was genuinely fascinated listening to Joe speak from the cultural center. He easily gave the best insight I've heard about the past and present Native American hardships. Joe spoke of the Gadsden Purchase which sliced O'odham land and families in half with the US- Mexico border and of the way which border patrol is nothing but uninterested in respecting tribal lands and people. What always disheartens me the most is hearing about the cultural genocide of the Native Population. I have learned about the Catholic Missionaries who came and forged a

European religion on them, and I am aware that the Carlisle boarding school separated young Native Americans to ensure that Native traditions and language were lost, but when I heard Joe talking about the way 'No Child Left Behind' had further made cultural education impossible- I became almost hopeless. Will dominant people ever be willing to accept or even make space for different populations? I can only hope there will be a day people begin to realize that different perspectives are not threatening- but extremely eye-opening and essential.

On a more positive note, it is great to be surrounded by people who are equally interested in experiencing- if only for a week- the Tohono O'odham way of life. I hope we can be like Tortoises and let life travel at its rightful pace

### **Pavan**

I have to admit that I was at least a little nervous for the trip. Culturally there is just so much to absorb. Today's trip to the cultural center really made me reconsider this initial thought. The O'odham people are incredible and the conversation about traditions and past ways and how they interact in the modern society.

Also, I have to say having the chance to meet so many folks who are important in the nation or even were elders is truly humbling. I think that in some ways it is a true example of civic engagement. I honestly have thought a lot about how to apply these lessons to my work with RSs.

I have also started to realize how socially constructed time is. It is incredibly refreshing to realize life is not about 15 meetings a day. Just being helpful here is rewarding but in a lot of ways our work here is an equal partnership for all that we have been able to return.

Hearing from Joe and Bernard was so rewarding. Their discussion of money and the relationship with the federal government was truly eye opening. I cannot help but wonder how the O'odham world would be different if they had truly been treated as a "Sovereign Nation."

Working with the kids is challenging but also fun. No matter what the background attention and love seen so important in kid's development. Seeing how much they enjoy the attention is a mixed blessing as I can't help but wonder if they would get some attention without the volunteer group.

Lastly, working on the pool was a great experience. It is not finished yet but seeing it come along has been very rewarding. I think it leaves me with the metaphor of the pool. A little work and attention can make a difference and if a small few focus on what needs to be done many can enjoy the fruits of their labor.

### **Tuesday March 15**

### **Steven Seland**

Today was our first "real" work day at the recreational center because the previous day had compiled of cultural orientations at the museum. I am really glad we were able to work it

out this year so that we could go to the museum in the beginning of the week instead of at the end of the week. I think this really helped the team to understand the history and the present aspects of the culture as well as to understand the complex issues faced by the Nation currently. Especially when working with the kids we are constantly exposed to the multitude of poverty faced by the O'odham- especially the youth.

One of the highlights, and at the same time low points, of the day was when we took the kids out to the community to clean up the amount of trash and litter in the surrounding area. It was truly sad to see how much garbage, broken glass, and other trash was found and within such a small space. There was also a tremendous amount of barbed wire and other dangerous material and it was such a shock to think that everyday these kids play in such an environment without a second thought.

I can't imagine having such experience be a part of my childhood and it is nature that it is such a normalized component of them. It was always depressing to see such a beautiful landscape marked with all of this litter and thinking about the negative message this sends out to the children.

Having said all of that I thought it was a positive and well guided intent to have the kids participate in such an activity and that it helped plant the seed for positive change in the future. Also, the kids were totally enthusiastic about picking up the trash and seemed to thrive with the positive attention they received from picking up the trash. Juan and I were paired with Vanessa, Samira, Marlin, and little Adrian and it was heart breaking to watch them dig through the piles of trash but exhibit great enthusiasm and effort while doing it. I can't imagine ever being willing at the age to do such thing but these kids were more than excited about doing it.

After picking up the trash we went back and the kids ate their snacks and the team split in half to go to the windmill project and Jamal and I stayed at the recreation center to work with the kids.

The highlight of the evening was when the other half came back super late and complained about the Lowell group. All in all, it was a great first work day and I am excited to see how the rest of the week unfolds.

### **Elizabeth Austin**

So today was the 2<sup>nd</sup> day working on the pool. I was actually so excited and motivated to get to work! Yesterday was hard, messy, grimy algae-ridden work but it was so rewarding to witness the pool transform. Between yesterday and today the water changed from a sickly black-green to a clear blue. We can now see the bottom of the pool! ... And the small beach's worth of sand and rocks that have settled there. Although we've made huge improvements, it's frustrating to be limited because the pool vacuum doesn't really work. Hopefully by the end of the trip it'll be completely finished.

Later in the afternoon Fred divided everyone up into small groups to pick up trash from the desert. I tried to motivate the kids by turning it into a competition, see who can pick up the most. I was surprised to find that some of the younger ones played along but the extra

motivation wasn't necessary. The kids were easily willing to tag along and help out. However, as surprising as that was I was more surprised and sad to witness Kindergardeners rummaging among barbed wire and endless amounts of shattered glass. Yet, despite this, everyone seemed to have fun exploring the village; visiting friend's houses and watching the dogs chase the cattle around the coral. I came away from the activity with mixed emotions.

Later that afternoon the activity staff asked me to help run the aerobics/dance class. I was so excited to share my experiences to give the kids a new and different activity to try. What I failed to realize was that my Disney-pop playlist (which I had prepared before understanding my audience) would not appeal to 20 rambunctious 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade boys. So after realizing that anything I'd planned wouldn't work I went to freeze-dance; which evolved into a spontaneous, wild and fun dance party. It was exhausting but so much fun and a huge release. Everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves, smiling and laughing. I was really glad to have helped orchestrate it.

Outside of the tangible, measurable, work we have been doing, I feel like there has been a huge amount of intangible and immeasurable progress. Each day I grow closer to each team member, bonding through shared experiences. Our time spent with the kids is paying off, many of us have given nicknames (mine is Lizard, an expansion of Liz). Many of the kids who were shy and reserved are now opening up, running to hug us in the morning and pig-piling on our backs. I know we still have almost ½ of the trip to go but I am, excited to see how these relationships continue to evolve side notes and other memories (post this entry).

- U. Mass Lowell people... enough said
- Windmill field trip and the hours of knots
- Zombie piggy-back tunnel tag
- Group reflection on the picnic bench under the stars
- Being accepted by the kids and having them completely open up and confide in me
- Learning to be a mentor and leader
- Howling at the dogs
- Juan's missing water bottle
- Horse chasing
- The sunsets/wildlife
- Speaking Spanish/hearing O'odham in the nursing home
- Authentic O'odham food at FOCA

There is not enough time in the day or space in the book to elaborate on the whole experience. It's just overall indescribable and immeasurably amazingly fun and powerful.

### **Wednesday March 16<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Oanh-Nhi**

The day started off slowly. Juan, Susannah and I decided to stay at the rec center although we tried to clean the pool-that failed. .

## **Sun Lee**

Today, I had the chance to visit the nursing home in O'odham. Frankly I have never been to a nursing home so I was very nervous when I entered the front door. The workers at the nursing home were really nice and friendly so that helped me a lot with getting used to the environment. The elders were blunt. They were all sleeping in a common room when we got there to pick them up. They are all in wheel-chairs and most of them didn't even have enough strength to hold up their legs for two seconds. We were trying to talk to them in English and Spanish but no one really responded to our conversation. The first activity was exercise and stretching. They were simple moves but none of them were able to follow the task. Then they played basketball. The elders shot around to a small basket for a good thirty minutes. The third activity was snack time and they grabbed a small juice box and a yogurt. We had to help them out with eating and they spilled literally every other scoop. Then they had coloring and painting activity to celebrate the Saint Patrick's Day. It was both amazing and sad to see them coloring because they were like a five year old boy who couldn't decide which color to choose. As a last activity, we sat down with them to company them. It was kind of disappointing because they shut down every conversation I tried to make. Overall, this was a great experience and it was cool to examine both the younger (Recreation Center) and the older (the nursing home) generations of the Native Americans.

After we met back to the Recreation Center, it was great to see my kids back and they were excited to see us as well. We played a few games of basketball and dodge-ball and the kids are more athletic that I thought. One thing I remember the most from today was realizing the fact that tomorrow is out last full day! I cannot believe how fast the time flew by and it has been a great time! Also, many kids were asking when we are leaving and I was thinking how sad they would be and how I am going to miss these kids so bad! Tomorrow I want to take as many pictures with them so I have something to remember.

## **Thursday March 17<sup>th</sup>**

### **Julia Hanson**

Today has been crazy full of ups and downs and a lot of really big moments for the group. We went to a cemetery this morning to clean. This was one kind of frustrating because there was just so much stuff to clean and it felt like even though we were working forever, we barely cracked the surface of what needed to be done. Afterwards we took a spontaneous trip to Dairy Queen which was random, but really fun and a really good time to bond with B, Matt, Susannah, and Sun before we leave tomorrow.

Once we were back at the recreational center, we played with the kids. It was bittersweet because we had to tell them we were leaving tomorrow, but also really fun because we had danced and played until late at night. These kids have just taught me so much about myself and what I want to do and accomplish. They're so tough and strong despite everything they've dealt

with, which is amazing. Every day I learn something new about their lives and what matters to them. I wish they knew a little more about their culture, but they definitely have a lot to offer. After the kids left we are and debriefed. I don't really know how to write down everything we talked about- I don't even think I should. It was what it was, and I'll definitely never forget it. Between the kids, the land, the culture, and the tea, this experience has affected me inside and out and I really hope I have the opportunity to return next year.

### **Emily**

I applied to this trip because I am intrigued and disheartened when learning about Native American history and culture. I began this trip vey ambivalent. As much as I was enjoying the company and loving being engulfed in the O'odham life style, I couldn't quite overcome the lingering uneasiness I felt "serving" a mistreated a and misrepresented population with 9 other privileged Dickinson students. I just hoped it came across to Sam, Linda, all the children and anyone else we crossed paths with that we were there to learn from them- about their distinct culture and about the modern day Native American ways, struggles and joys of life. We leave early tomorrow morning and I can enthusiastically say that I am now convinced this trip is well worth it and well received for more reason than I am capable of describing on paper. Yesterday's windmill excursion with Sam assured me that he was genuinely proud and excited to share his Nation with us. I was awesome adventuring though miles of Arizona desert and touching seeing Sam's pleasure in not only leading us but also waiting on our reactions.

I feel like it goes without saying that getting to know the kids at the recreation center was the most fun and rewarding aspect of the week. I was not anticipating feeling so attached to some of these kids after just a week. It was impossible not to when they are so simultaneously filled with infectious joy and tragic stories of alcoholic parents, dead family members, and friends who start cutting in elementary school. To go from talking about parents who abuse one another to having dance parties to Black Eyed Peas is a transition so symbolic of the Tohono O'odham children- innocence corrupted well before its due date paired with an equivalent appreciation and hoped that life will be fun and worthwhile. I can only hope that these kids realize how much we reciprocate their excitement to spend time with one another and that will be thinking about them and their futures beyond our departure tomorrow.

I am so thankful for this experience and the people I shared it with. You are all beautiful people and I am so excited to see your jovial smiles around campus!!

p.s. keep eating Tutie Fruities despite Steven's words about their crap nutritional content.

### **Susannah**

I don't think I can say what I need to say so I am going to list come favorite moments and maybe that will get me there.

Driving back from Ajo yesterday (Thursday), Neil Young's "Natural Beauty" was on the iPod and we were almost home on route 21. B spotted two of the horses- one had the gorgeous white blaze on his nose/face and both were a beautiful chestnut color. I slowed almost to a stop

and they moved aside to let me pass then went off the road into the dust and the desert. The song is a slow country song with one main chorus: "I'm not sure all beauty should be/ preserved like a monument in nature." It is such a spectacular moment; for the rest of the rest of my life I will always think of those horses turning to look us in the eyes- the one with the blaze stopped and looked straight at us and I was thinking about the lyrics and how they are going to die and we will die too and this is a very special time.

Other moments that will stick with me: driving back from Kupk on Thursday for no good reason I sped up spontaneously on the dirt road, just an impulse, super fun.

This morning I got to give Precious the last piggyback ride. I am sad that Oneida never came back when I hugged Mendrel, too, and he said "I don't want you to leave!" He said "when you hug my head like that it hurts" so I went in for a softer hug and he said "it still hurts." Sad but so glorious too.

Pavan and I were talking, coming back from the rental cars, about transitions- how sad and significant it is that we walk with people who are always leaving. I hope that everyone on this trip sees how much they gave and that when you give something it lingers- it doesn't stop just because you didn't see it. Giving yourself your space and time doesn't mean that you can be open to the sadness of seeing people leave and still enjoy knowing that there is joy behind us and joy ahead of us! I'm preaching because I'm sad myself right now but this is something- connecting with younger people and letting go- is something I've done a lot and I've learned to appreciate the connection as much if not more as the letting go.

I wish you all lovely and certain (i.e. definitely you'll get them) things. Hope your relationships continue and thanks for being so connected and alive this week.

## **Pavan**

It is one thing to be ignorant and it's another to know better and do nothing! Bill Ayers recently said something equivalent to this and it has stuck with me throughout this trip. This week I have been treated into a culture, religion, nation and world that I knew existed but may never be able to truly fully explain.

This week is so incredible and I hardly believe that we will be leaving tomorrow. This morning we visited the nursing home and despite not having much to do it was incredible because of the unity Walk that stopped by to see the residents. Seeing the young members of the O'odham Nation stopping to show respect was very educational and moving.

The real peak of my day with the kids from Pisenomo came from Tyler. Just seeing how much he has come out of his shell was great. He beat me in three separate games of lon , but more importantly he likes school and loves his family very much.

I have to admit I am a bit sad we didn't finish the pool cleaning but I know at least 15 hours were spent on it and you could see the difference.

The thing that I really wonder is if the students know how proud of them I am and how much phenomenal work they did this week. The challenge of working with this service trip is

near and dear to my heart as every year students move on but you are glad to have been a part of their experience.

As someone who often works with and reflects about development, it is so obvious that our students touched these students lives. It only takes one clear voice to change the world and one instance in time to change someone's life.

This trip is a once in a lifetime opportunity. I am so honored to have been a part of it. I really hope to go back in the future. The connection and experience cannot be matched. I know I will visit O'odham Nation again and do the work to stay aware of what is happening in the nation.

- Steve→Passionate, fun, respectful, always a good time
- Oanh-Nhi→ sweet, amazing with kids, creative, changed a life this week for sure
- Sun→open, so good with children, so reflective; hope he opens up to more folk so they can recognize how amazing he is
- Nadine→ strong willed, can recognize how great he is, passionate, chef, committed to the kids
- Bernadette→amazingly gracious leader, strong valued, made this experience phenomenal
- Emily→Badass really helped me open up, always willing to help and so committed to learning
- Susannah→dream-team co-captain, friend in a world of acquaintances so much depth, my lens to help me see
- Matt→ my photography buddy, so open and willing to dive in, hungry for life, great person
- Juan→ true leadership, honest and true, great sense of humor, wouldn't have been the same without him
- Julie→ grew so much, amazingly talented, impressive and important perspective, senior dressed as a first year
- Elizabeth→excitement in a 5 foot bottle, musketeer truly caring individual little sis
- Pavan→ honored and humbled to be a part of the experience and to call you all friends