

Serve the World

**GUATEMALA 2010
REFLECTION JOURNAL**



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Office of Religious Life
and Community Services

Guatemala has touched us all.

As we began to plan for this year's international Serve the World trip, where to go was the hardest discussion (after the color of the t-shirts debate). After a tragedy of last year and student's passing on the trip, the leadership struggled with the emotional connection with coming back. However we were very set on one thing: it was the right thing to do. The people, the hospitality, and the ability to share hope in the town we would call home in Guatemala was where we should go.

This year proved that decision to be correct. The people of Santa Cruz del Quiche were amazingly hospitable and showed us love, grace, and friendship. They taught us about community and shared their stories. They taught us how to cook steaks on a grill and make soup that always tasted wonderful. They taught us about our selves and shared the problems of their community. They opened their homes to share hot showers and challenged us in a friendly game of soccer. They allowed us to work beside them explaining in detail how the project needed to go forward.

In Antigua we met women whose lives would be changed because of water filters. We saw the education and dedication of a Dickinson alumnae who is changing the world for many people.

We learned how to pick coffee, how to filter water, and how essential it is to care for one another. From late night talks, to identical Guatemalan blankets, to hours of reflection, to many many games of Catch Phras: again this team showed the compassion and care that Dickinsonians can give and share with each other and with the communities we serve beside.

Thank you for sharing your break to change these communities and bringing hope to so many people. Read on and see how each of you grew, were challenged, and learned from our brief (but memorable) time in Guatemala.

much. Should anybody have that much wealth? Should

Day 11: January 21, 2010

Our last night in Guatemala, which began very positively as we dance the night away at a salsa bar in Antigua, was concluded with Cate's frightening fall off her balcony only a few hours after our return. Everyone was frightened and worried, and having to leave Guatemala without her makes our team feel incomplete. A few of us took a short walking tour of Antigua this morning with Mario, in which we snapped photos of beautiful churches and cobblestone streets. At this point in time, the team is spread across the airport floor, huddled under our matching blankets from Quiche, and our now foul-smelling pillows. Our plane will surely be delayed going into Atlanta; we will have a 6 hour wait there and arrive at Reagan airport past midnight.

In the end, the team raced from the landing in Atlanta, through customs, to make the connections back to Washington Reagan Airport successfully. Cate was joined by her mom in Guatemala for a week of recovery before flying home. Remarkably, she only suffered two fracture vertebrae and a colorful ankle. Her spirit and passion for service remained steadfast and she returned to campus a week late to start the spring semester.

As we look at the pictures, retell the stories, remember the lessons we learned from the people of Guatemala, and read these reflections, it is evident each person was touched by this experience. Whether it challenged our stereo-types, forced us from our comfort zones, reinforced our values, or opened our eyes to a new way of life, we all take pieces of this experience forward. It is another contribution within our Dickinson education that makes us each continue to engage in civic leadership and serve the world ...thank you for sharing this opportunity and experience.

we be grateful for her generosity or ashamed of our excesses? Whatever the answer, it was a really fun day.

-Josh

Cate's health is on everyone's minds; we hope she will recover fast and that the accident will leave no lasting injuries. We are all looking forward to seeing her back in the States as soon as possible, happy and healthy. Overall, this trip has been an incredible experience in both serving others and in forming close relationships. Our team has become incredibly close, which we hope to maintain throughout the upcoming semester as well as into the future.

-Pauline

Today has been a day of traveling. Everything has gone relatively smooth. It was especially funny to see everyone's reaction to our unique blankets! I am sad this trip is coming to an end but it was filled with great memories from construction to farming to building friendships with each other and the locals. I have learned so much from the Guatemalans and I feel that we also had a positive impact on them. They are so appreciative of the simple things we do. It has really changed my perspective of serving others. This trip has shown me that one person, one group, can really make a difference! I have learned to really appreciate the simple things in life whether it be a hug or a smile. Although this trip only lasted ten days, I will remember and reflect on it for a lifetime.

-Paige

Day 1: January 11, 2010

Today we departed for our trip. We all met in Carlisle and spent time getting to know one another before we boarded the buses at 1:00 a.m. From there, we made our way to DC to catch our plane to ATL. I'm pretty sure everyone passed out before the plane even took off. We arrived early to ATL and hopped on the train to get to the other terminal (we went from A to E). We boarded the plane at 9:50 a.m. and were all anxious to arrive in GUATEMALA!

Although our landing was a bit rough, customs was pretty simple. Outside the Guatemala City Airport, we were greeted by Mario, our interpreter, and Johnny Bravo who drove probably the coolest school bus I've ever seen. Her name is SUPERNIÑA. Over 3 hours were spent winding up and down through the mountains of Northern Guat. Until we finally arrived at the Santa Cruz Del Quiche Methodist Church. We met with the members of the church and mingled a little before we all sat down for our first, delicious meal in Guatemala. We devoured pork chops, squash, carrots, rice, and amazing homemade tortillas. We were also fortunate enough to have some watermelon which is a delicacy here in Guatemala. We spent the rest of the evening playing Catch Phrase and preparing for a hard days work tomorrow.

The group is amazing and everyone gets along so well. I know the rest of the trip is going to be great.

Leah

As I sit down and write this journal, days after I am truly supposed to write it, I reflect on my previous years experience and see how it has changed my life dramatically. It has made me appreciate the little things in life, to live in the present, and never under appreciate the generosity of people in this world. The day before

we left for Guatemala on the 10th of January, at Mira's, I thought about Nate a bit and the fact that it was the 1 year anniversary of his death and the moment that changed my life for the better. I chatted with everyone in the group and sat with them while we ate and hoped for an injury free trip. After a night of festivities, games and fun, we left around 1 am on Monday morning for Reagan airport. I can't help but laugh now thinking about when the mini-buses engulfed Amanda in smoke, making her cough a bit. It sounds bad but it was actually hilarious.

It was a cold night and ride on the bus until Mira asked for the heat to be turned on. We arrived at Reagan in one piece and continued to Atlanta even though I lost my peanut butter in customs and Josh his Nutella. On the plane ride from Atlanta to Guatemala, I couldn't but thinking back to my first time arriving in this beautiful country when Nate sat next to me and watched in awe at the Mountains, and smiled the whole time like a kid in a candy shop.

After a long but interesting ride through the dangerous mountains of Guatemala, we finally arrived at Santa Cruz del Quiche. It was nice to see the people of the town welcome us into their town, church and homes like we were there our entire lives. After introductions were made, our group got comfortable, made our beds, ate dinner and went to bed.

It is inspiring to be back in this country after such a terrible accident on the previous trip. I feel like I am a task that was left unfinished from the previous trip. The people are so warm and friendly on just the first day. I can't wait to see what will happen on this trip in the future. Okay, bye!

-Tyler

Day 2: January 12, 2010

Today is our first day of work and everyone is anxious to help. There seem to be many small projects which require a couple of people at once. As usual the first day is full of "hurry up and waits." It's 2 p.m. now and there are 4 different projects: remaking a roof, making cement, laying concrete and working on building the

Then we went to dinner in Antigua. It truly is such a beautiful city and is so rich in history. After dinner, Mario took the group into town. It was a nice way to wrap up our last night in Guatemala. It was been a great 10 days in this country. Between our stay in Quiche and our short time in Antigua, there are just so many values that can be taken away from this experience. I experienced the power of generosity with the local families in Quiche. I was reminded of the importance of patience by Manuel and Alkalino. While our time in Quiche demonstrated the positive effects of a strong community, our time with Christine reminded me of the importance of philanthropy. These are all things I already know, but I sometimes get too wrapped up in life to focus on these fundamentals. I am sad that I will be getting on a plane to return to Carlisle tomorrow. I will miss Guatemala, the church, the beautiful landscape, the people and hanging out with the team.

-XO Romo

This morning we took Super Nina to Christine Wilson's house, just outside of Antigua. It is certainly the most beautiful estate that I have ever visited. After we arrived, she gave us a quick tour of the EcoFiltro production plant and then brought us to a women's cooperative to distribute the filters. Watching the women listen attentively to a tutorial about their new filters, I realized just how much our fundraising would impact real people.

Next, we returned to Christine's where we ate the most delicious, replenishing meal of my life. Freshly squeezed juices, steak kabobs, grilled chicken, vegetarian lasagna, rice, vegetables, salad. It was all there, and it was all scrumptious. That afternoon, we learned about the coffee production process and picked beans for an hour. Our day was capped off with a fancy-shmancy dinner in downtown Antigua.

Today, I encountered more wealth than I ever had before. To use the overused buzzword of the trip, it was difficult to see such luxury juxtaposed with such poverty. It is wonderful that Christine's family uses some of its wealth to help others. Yet they still have so

Tonight we went to a discotec with Mario and managed to enjoy ourselves with the little time we had. Although we were the only group in there, we had a great team bonding moment. I feel after spending a week in Quiche, I couldn't actually consider this a team but a family. This Serve the World experience inspired me even more to engage the community and/ or the world.

-J.B.

Today was long but very informative and fun. We went to Christine Wilson's home/farm and learned about the coffee making process. We also had the opportunity to distribute water filters at a local school. The making and distribution of water filters is also one of Christine's projects. It was great to see a person making a difference in people's lives that happened to be a Dickinson Alum. I'm glad we had the opportunity to meet this great person.

-David Torres

Today we spent the day at the coffee farm in Antigua. Christine, the Dickinson Alumnae, hosted us at her gorgeous home for the day. After getting to her house, we learned a bit about coffee, worms, and the different methods used on the farm. Then we learned about Christine and her husband's EcoFiltro project. It was cool to see how a few simple materials could be put together to create such useful water filters. I appreciated the care that was put into the project with the registration of each filter, the contact with each user when it is time to renew, and the educational component.

We had the opportunity to travel to a co-op and give water filters to 15 Guatemalan families. The women were so appreciative of the filters. Hearing the women express their gratitude was very meaningful. We then headed back to Christine's, where we ate an amazing lunch. I had the opportunity to eat with Christine. Hearing her story was very inspiring, she also gave insight into some aspects of Guatemalan Politics, an aspect of the country that was little touched upon during our stay in Quiche. After lunch, we had our coffee picking competition, and we met Christine's children and her great Danes.

earthquake pillars. It was freezing last night and everyone was awake, but didn't know that until this morning. Most of their air mattresses deflated and sleep was apparently very hard to come by. However our first stop at the market this morning was to buy "ponchos" (blankets). Hopefully tonight we'll get more sleep. It is much colder here than we expected last night it was in the 40's and today is probably in the 70's. The team seems to be coming together, which is very exciting and satisfying to see our Spanish speakers realizing their importance in helping us communicate.

Cate

Today we get to do some work for the first time. After a very cold night we got up to a very nice day. It's so nice to work with everyone and everyone is eager to pitch in. So far we have begun to remove bricks in order to put a roof on the classrooms. It's been a really fun first day. We got a chance to go into the market and buy blankets. It was really interesting to get a chance to look around the town and interact with some of the local people. This is a great place and everyone seems so welcoming. We get to shower as well, which will be nice. The group is getting along well and I can't wait to hear how the first day with the kids goes.

Allison

Day 3: January 13,2010

Today is our second day of work. I spent the morning putting what I learned last year to good use, I cut, tied and twisted metal wires to make earthquake proof structures. I also was able to conquer some of my fear of heights, walking on the scaffolding. Yesterday, my group taught a very successful lesson to about 12 students. While walking around the circle during coloring time, I stopped to talk to the kids and ask them questions about themselves. Some were shy, but one little girl answered my questions then asked me about myself. I was able to understand her and have a full conversation. What I realized was that she was just as interested about me and our group as I was about her. I also realized how smart she was, which

honestly surprised me a little, but also made me a lot more cautious of preconceived notions. Sometimes, I feel like many Americans think that they are the smartest, fastest, strongest, country in the world, however everyone I've met here so far has proved them wrong.

Amanda

After today, traditional interpretations of the phrase “go kick rocks” hold no significance WHATSOEVER. Sitting on a mound of over a million rocks while shoving them into a bucket, IS what it means to “go kick rocks.” This phrase can now even apply to using shovels and buckets to transport rocks. When the team initially arrived on the worksite it seemed as if there was little to do. Little did we know we were going to be responsible for transporting an island of rocks to a new location. The task seemed impossible but by lunch it was complete. We started off by moving rocks to the wheel barrow with shovels and hoes. The small buckets were very effective for picking up rocks as well. The task did become more difficult as we neared group level but everyone's effort and great teamwork came a very long way. The wall of the church is now covered with the millions of rocks and I am sure we are going to have to move it again another day just as we suspected yesterday. Still WE CAME WE SAW WE CONQUERED! WE WITNESSED THE GREAT VALUE AND POWER IN TEAMWORK YAY! (Oh and we played several games of the Wah, Categories, and Taps)

Fab

I've always been a proponent of doing things outside of myself and comfort zone in order to gain a greater appreciation for the world and those who inhabit it. Leading up to this trip, I wasn't sure how I would react to being in Guatemala. To immerse myself once again in the culture, surrounded by some of the same people and virtually the same working/ living conditions. So far it has been easier than expected which, I think, is a testament to both the generosity of the people as well as everyone else on the trip. It really does say a lot when a group of students dedicate their time and efforts – which easily could be directed towards more superficial endeavors—for an

This morning was our final morning in Santa Cruz del Quiche. Even though it seemed that we did not work a lot, looking at the worksite this morning proved the opposite. We actually got so much done in the week we worked there. It was bitter/sweet to leave the church. I am still amazed by how much this community appreciated us. After saying goodbye, it was time to go off to Antigua. The drive wasn't too bad to Antigua because it was cool to get closer and closer to the volcanoes. Once we settled into the hotel, I went with Mira, Mario, Peter, David, and Tyler to the grocery store. Of course, Mario said it was only 5 blocks away, but in reality it was about a mile walk. The grocery store was very crowded, enormous, and unorganized. When we got back to the hotel, I got to catch the end portion of an amazing sunset. After taking a 20 minute long hot shower (which was awesome), we all went to Chicken Campero. I was way too tired to go out tonight so I just stayed in. I am looking forward to going to the coffee farm tomorrow. I bet we are going to have a picking contest and Cate's team and Josh's team will tie for first place with 23 pounds each. I bet her house is amazing and she will probably have pictures of the Pope and Mother Theresa up on her walls. Hopefully my predictions will be correct.

Much Love,
Kevin

Day 10: January 20, 2010

Today we spent the day learning about how coffee is processed and exported and water filtration system. I was very touched by how much effort Christine and her husband devoted to helping their community by providing water filters to needy families to prevent illness in their children.

We will be leaving for the U.S. tomorrow and it feels bitter-sweet the group has been fun and have bonded over the past 9 days. Hopefully, the return home will be easy and without any delays or complications.

-Maryam

inson College. There was a small feeling of separation between students and administrators because I was feeling the stress of getting my work done while balancing the demands of my family at home. This was something that didn't exist in Guatemala because I couldn't access my email or talk to my husband.

All and all I enjoy seeing the 18 new faces on campus. I always appreciate the quick "hi Annie" I hear around. I hope to have the chance to interact with each of you again in whatever capacity in which that might happen.

-Annie

Day 9: January 19, 2010

Despite the scary ending, this trip has been a fantastic experience. It has taught me a lot about the importance of community, hope for a better tomorrow, and face-to-face interactions. I'll always remember the way in which members of the Santa Cruz del Quiche community opened their homes and hearts for a group of strangers and, in turn, treated us as if we were a part of their closest family. Similarly, I think everyone would agree on how awesome it was to directly distribute some of the water filters we sponsored. We were greeted with smiles and loads of thanks which was especially touching and rejuvenating. I'll also never forget how positive our group remained in spite of so much down time. Endless games of Wah, steps from JB and Kenya, and the Good Morning Song were definitely highlights. Other highlights include reflections and discussions at night under that stars which, by the way, ranged from topics that mirrored the intellect of a 4 year old to some of the greatest philosophical questions ever known to man (awesome). And of course, who could ever forget my dogg (yes pun intended), George Clooney. You are all amazing. Thanks so much for making this an incredible experience.

-Dave Munn

experience like this. It's great seeing everyone interact with the workers and teach/play with the children. It's also great seeing members of the team work and interact with one another. Whether we like it or not, we'll be family for the next week. I'm pleased with what we have experienced so far and have high hopes for the remainder of the trip. Peace and Love.

D Munny

Today, was excellent. Everyone slept better and the pancakes our lovely cooks made this morning were amazing. I'm getting a little more accustomed to the height of everyone here but still feel tall and struggled to fit under the showerhead. I loved working with the mason today; the sun was hot and the view was spectacular. On one side were mountains and the other was the city of Santa Cruz del Quiche. The facades of houses are very colorful here. I definitely prefer the pastel point to the sterile earth tones back home in the states.

Our group's chemistry is improving on its already great foundation and I feel like we are enjoying time in the local community as well as with one another. I hope that more work becomes available for us because we found ourselves with a lot of free time today. We also went to the church camp today so that we could shower. There was a service going on in the church. When we'd showered and the service had ended, we talked with some of the church members. I especially enjoyed sharing thoughts on futbol with a fellow Barcelona fan. I'm looking forward to dinner and reflections. Guatemala is beautiful and this trip is rewarding.

Peace, Pedro

We are here, I feel it has taken us these three days to get used to being in Guatemala. I am writing this at 9:30 at night because at 3:00 p.m. I was convinced nothing exciting has happened today. The day started with less work than expected and we all were digging through our camp leaders training to think of new and exciting games. With that being said, the day really picked up with a frank

conversation with Dave, Josh and Maryanne. We were all ready to get out and see Guatemala beyond, “the insides of the compound walls.”

Walking through the streets is eye opening but comforting. While in Barnes and Nobles I was reading a top 10 list books. Guatemala ranked 9 on the top 10 most dangerous countries. I haven't figured out why??? Mario is so concerned about our safety as we walked through the streets...but why? I just don't see the danger.

My hope is that I have the opportunity to explore Guatemala and understand the service we are providing.

Annie

Day 4: January 14, 2010

I JUST SAW AN ACTUAL MARIJUANA PLANT! It's 10:33 a.m. and Manuel (a Guatemalan worker) pointed out a marijuana plant to me while we were working on the roof. He asked me in Spanish if I smelled what he smelled. I was semi-congested so it took me a while to smell it. He just randomly told me it was the smell of marijuana and pointed it out from the view from high above. I couldn't believe that someone would actually plant that next to a church. I asked Mario if it was legal and he told me “no, they grow it, to smoke it and sell it.” So yeah, that's my story for the first 4 hours I've been awake. Now to clean garbage in the streets.

JB

This is our third day of doing construction I believe and I think we are starting to get the hang of it. I can see everyone getting closer to Mario, the workers, and our cooks despite the language barrier with some of our group. I was especially excited we were given more freedom to walk to the store and go play a game of soccer later tonight. I am also glad that we haven't managed to offend anyone (to

I think in America, we all get wrapped up in furthering our education, and obtaining the most lucrative career possible, so that we can live comfortable lives. Meanwhile, our lives are spent ignoring and distrusting strangers, hence living in a bubble of our family and friends. And while I recognize that family and friends are the most important thing in life, I wonder why can't my list of friends include everyone from my home town. Why don't I feel comfortable leaving my blanket and backpack in a park filled with other park-goers? Why can't everyone enjoy an hour off of work on a Tuesday afternoon to go to the lake and eat lunch as a community? Why can't I take my shoes off and play soccer with my friends in a field? I have learned a lot from our 10 days in Guatemala, but I think the most simple, yet essential lesson I have taken from this trip is to enjoy the simple things in life, and live every day to the fullest.

-Amanda

I have written this journal entry 5 or 6 times and I continually delete it because I cannot sum up this experience. I feel like I have 100 millions things going through my mind. I want to start by talking about the last 24 hours of our time in Guatemala. When I got the call from Mira that she was not going home, I was in charge of getting everyone back to Carlisle and I was very nervous. I have traveled internationally by myself about 15 times and am generally comfortable in an airport, but trying to get through with 20 people, 20 tickets, 20 taxes, 20 bags of luggage was nerve racking. It would only take one person trying to bring home drugs, meat, or even a Guatemalan puppy to hold us up and cause serious problems. Thankfully everyone did great and the group showed tremendous maturity in a pretty stressful situation. I was very thankful to all the Spanish speakers who I pretty much drug around all day and night.

Returning home was very interesting. I was very tired and knew I had to work all weekend running orientation. Going to Alex's house was a little bitter sweet. It was nice to see everyone again after one day off, but at the same time it was weird to see everyone on campus, all dressed up and somewhat back to the social order of Dick-

By the time the lesson was over my cheeks hurt from smiling. The children really seem to appreciate us and love to laugh as much as we do. To end the day with a bang, we rented a soccer field and played with the locals. It was a blast and team agreed this image would be perfect “postcard” moment. Sometimes I think it’s silly to travel so far and to raise so much money to do what we do here. Doesn’t it seem kind of ridiculous to come here when there is need in much closer areas? Yes, I can understand that perspective, my grandmother firmly believes that I’m out of my mind to participate in such far fetched dreaming. However, Ahma, as cultured as she is, doesn’t know what it feels like to really be selfless, and work for someone else to better THEIR life. Despite the lack of work, I really believe that our presence here has positively impacted the lives of the people in this community and the ’10 STW Guatemala team.

Happy Trails,
Cate

On our drive from Santa Cruz del Quiche to Antigua, we passed a small lake located in what looked to be a public park. This park was filled with picnic tables and the tables were filled with families. Even though it was a Tuesday, the whole town seemed to be enjoying the park, eating their lunch, and soaking up the beautiful weather. While this may seem a little out of the ordinary, what really caught me off guard was that everyone seemed to be there together. Their tables were pushed together, their children ran barefoot together, and the food they ate seemed to be communal.

Now, either I stumbled upon a town-wide party at 12 pm on a Tuesday, or the people were genuinely taking their lunch breaks together as a community. I couldn't help but picture the parks near me, especially Central Park in NYC. Yes, the parks are crowded with people, but not always on a Tuesday afternoon, and when they are crowded, people tend to stick to themselves, becoming very possessive of their space and belongings. They always make sure that if someone wants to go to the swings, or use the restroom, there must always be someone watching their "stuff". I am guilty of this obses-

my knowledge). One aspect of this trip that I also cherish is how our team seems to get along with ease. Coming on this trip JB was probably the only person I could say I knew well but through our various games (WA!!!), our reflections, and our own personal conversations, I could say I almost like the members of this trip better than the students I’ve met on my own at Dickinson. I hope we all continue to speak after this experience. One of the last things I wanted to comment on was the rich culture. Of the few places I’ve been outside of the United States, I have never been anywhere with so much everyday culture. By everyday culture I am referring to their traditional dress, handmade building materials, and food. It seems in places we refer to as “Americanized” only bring their cultural dress and food out during a holiday or special occasions. I will also say the state of the country was not too much of a shock to me. Aside from the tourist ridden areas of Antigua, many of its citizens tend to live in the same conditions.

I think we are making a lot of progress and I’m looking forward to the other experiences this country has to offer.

Kenya

P.S. Paige and I saw some sheep/goats!

The trip has been great so far, despite our struggle to find work all the time. Aided by intense late night conversation, we have already grown very close as a group. Every day, I am struck by the beauty of this country—The mountains and valleys never fail to amaze me. It’s sad that some of the most beautiful landscapes in the world contain some of the worst poverty. The flatness of the USA may not always be aesthetically pleasing, but it is certainly conducive to economic development. The terrace farming we see here is a testament of the resourcefulness of the Guatemalan people. – Those are my thoughts, this is my entry.

No Name

After yet another poor night of sleep, I still find that the act of doing service can keep me fully energized throughout the day. Unfortunately, there has been a lack of jobs for us to do, however instead of just waiting impatiently we are having so much fun. I was glad to see my plan to pick up garbage come to fruition, even though I was on kitchen duty at the time.

Once we got to the camp, we played soccer. Even though I completely forgot how to dribble a soccer ball, it was still very fun. I also think it's cool how Mario joined in with us. After a shower, we went outside to find no Super Niña Junior. At first I was a little confused, but we got to spend some time chatting and admiring nature. I'm looking forward to see the volcanoes in Antigua and to do more work here.

-Kevin

Day 5: January 15, 2010

The group seems to be doing well, despite not having enough work to do. During times of non- activity, they are spending time with each other and it is obvious that new friendships are forming. As an administrator, I am feeling more of a connection with the group and it is easier to balance the role.

This is a very talented group of students and am happy that I am part of this trip. Regarding service, I felt that the purpose of coming here, providing service and challenging ourselves and one would view is happening. Looking forward to seeing how the next few days are.

-Maryam

It's another bright and sunny day on this worksite. The sound of hammering and power saws makeup most of the background noise. Today is the first day that we have a big project (besides mixing concrete), we get to cut wood exactly 8 inches! When there hasn't been enough work, we've occupied ourselves with games and team bonding.

between Paige and Alex for Hallelujah which definately. gave me chills.

After the ceremony was over and we said our hellos/goodbyes to the people of the Church before dinner I was excited to learn that we arranged a soccer match between us and the people of the town. This was an amazing feat that I thought wasn't going to be possible and one of many highlights of my day.

As an afterthought I have come to the realization that this trip is dramatically different from my first one to Guatemala for obvious reasons but that truly doesn't mater to me. What matters is that all joking aside I feel in some manner or way our trip to this town has made a dramatic impact on the people of this town and my life, the good and the bad memories. No trip is similar to the previous one but that aspect is what makes each trip mean that much more. It allows me as a student at Dickinson to be more involved and listen to different peoples stories as to how they have come to where they are now.

Much Love,

Tyler Meadely

Day 8: January 18, 2010

I had the opportunity to write on our first day of work and our last full day, today. The day began with "Good Morning" by John Legend, which wakes me up smiling every time. The team has really come together in many ways. We have learned MANY, MANY new games from Wal To the game with no name to Bipty-Bipty-Bop. Unfortunately we didn't have a ton of work to do on this site, so we resorted to those fantastic games. One of the highlights of today was our last lesson with the children where we played Desert, Ocean, Jungle (a game inspired by the legendary Cameron Kerr), musical chairs, freeze dance and attempted a lesson on geography and the USA. I got to man the music for freeze dance which was hilarious and I quickly acquired a helper.

benefits and drawbacks of tourism has been unparalleled in my life. I'm already excited for the service opportunities ahead of me.

-Peter

Today was an exciting day at the Chi Chi market. The sights were amazing to say the least. From the hustle and bustle of the people to the church celebrations taking place throughout the market. Everything I saw today were breathtaking and very interesting. I especially liked being caught in the midst of one of the fireworks going off in the market with a local carrying a statue screaming "BOMBA BOMBA BOMBA!" repeatedly. Don't worry the video will be up on facebook soon enough or as soon as I get around to doing that as well.

The aspects of the market that I liked the most was our groups interactions with the local people itself from haggling down prices for some great buys, admiring the intensity at the market especially in front of the church (for those that made it that far in the maze known as Chi Chi market you know what's up), and the church proceedings. It was incredible to watch all of these events take place at one time and in one place.

Another highlight of the day I must say was when our time at the market was dwindling and a girl who had been pestering Maryam about seeing her the day before and swearing she would give her money (which she eventually did). So then this girl came up to me and said she remembered me as well from the other day. I asked her what my name was and she simply replied "Jesus". I'm not sure if I look like a Jesus but I'll take what I can get these days.

After an amazing day at the market we ventured back home so that we could get back in time for Church and look dapper dandy for the residents of Santa Cruz del Quiche. I tried to look my best but I still say Young Buck Dave stole the show, props my dude. Anyways the Church service was great even though I couldn't understand what the pastor Don Miguel was saying and no thanks to Mario's terrible translation I thought it was a great service. I especially liked the duet

Yesterday was my favorite day here so far, I had a great conversation with Manuel in Spanish about his life here and was able to teach him some words in English. It was really nice to have one-on-one conversation with a local Guatemalan and be able to practice my Spanish. Dave's group also had our lesson yesterday with the children. We taught them about professions and taught them some simple English words. Red light, green light, was definitely a good choice, Omar was so cute with his cheating ways! Team picnic to the nic really came together yesterday, especially over dishes.

Overall this experience has been truly amazing and humbling and I regret waiting until my senior year to participate in a service trip. This trip has been a reminder of what matters in life; the relationships we build with other people. Even though we haven't been able to work all day, we've had the opportunity to grow closer as a group and with the community. The time we spend walking around Santa Cruz del Quiche and discussing our reflections have brought about many enlightening, cultural similarities and differences. Before going on this trip, I really didn't know most of the group here, but these past few days have made me appreciate and come to love everyone here. This experience has brought out the best in our group; just being immersed in the local community and working towards a common goal has exposed the greater purpose of this life. I'm very thankful for this experience and the people on this trip; I hope to inspire people back in the states with my memories... AND have many STW trip reunions!!

! Hasta Luego!

Nadine-dragon- Snookie

Today has been a productive day due to the fact that we have a little more work to do. The team is really good at taking turns with tasks during the day. Also, I noticed that the team is becoming more of a family. I noticed this at lunch time today and everyone is always polite, respectful and patient with one another. Although, these rules go out the window when we play catch phrase, the game with no name, the face game, etc. but it's all fun and games, I also got the opportunity to talk to Johnny Bravo (our bus driver) and I found out that he lived in LA which is where I'm from. There is more to

every individual than meets the eye and this is a concept that I want to take with me back to the states.

-David Torres

Today we woke up to the sounds of fireworks exploding in the square of Quiche. Not my typical alarm clock but it sure sparks to some of the cultural celebrations in this area. We were able to walk into town this afternoon to get ice cream. It was refreshing to get away from the work sire and venture into the refreshing energy of the town square. As we walked back to the church, the sun was setting and was a pretty sight.

Earlier in the work day, we had quite a number of tasks. We made another huge pile of cement and made/cut a bunch of boards. It was nice to see all of us being task-oriented. I enjoyed working together with Kevin, Amanda, and Leah to hull the boards together. Often times I can be a very independent person so it was gratifying to be reminded of how truly successful group work can be.

During reflections, we talked about how this trip has complicated how we see ourselves. Josh mentioned that he feels that he is his “best self” on this trip. I feel similarly on that when I attend this type of trip, I feel a sense of satisfying inner peace. It inspires me to be my best more often. I hope upon returning to the states, I can keep my “best self” in mind when I get engulfed with all my other activities and responsibilities.

Laura

Day 6: January 16, 2010

After a full work week of construction, hard work and sweat, we finally had the opportunity to indulge in a bit of tourism today. After enjoying a typical “desayuno” of scrambled eggs, black bean paste and tortillas, we rushed to wash dishes, apply sunscreen and load the Super Niña in order to leave Santa Cruz del Quiche by 8 a.m.

A 2-hour drive along “curvas peligrosas” and across the Pan-

what was being said I knew they were thanking us. It was so nice to feel so appreciated. I truly wish that I could express how I have gotten out of this experience to our hosts. The people in this community are so welcoming and gave us all hugs as we were leaving. The church service was a major highlight of the day. It was also great to see a few members of our group get involved in the service as well.

As the trip winds down and I write my final journal I have started to think about this experience. I just realized how glad I am that I have had the change to come on this trip. I have really enjoyed getting to know the people on this trip. My favorite part of each day is reflections and the time before bed. I really hope I can continue these friendships once I am back at Dickinson. I am truly grateful for this experience and now that I will always want to continue service to others in my life time.

-Allison

“Success is not completion. Success is inspiration.”

Today has been another day where we have had to envision things to do because there is simply not enough work for all of us. Waking up was different this morning but John Legend’s “Good Morning,” made it a bit easier. We started the day with huevos y jamon, toast, tea, and bean paste. As we started work, there were tons of boards to nail for the rood and tasks for everyone. The work has solely dwindled and now Pauline is the only one working on the construction project. Josh and I worked out our domestic sides and swept the kitchen, wash area, and eating area (Fabs helped too!) The group did another trash pickup around the neighborhood. Karen and her husband brought by some India Quiche—local cream soda.

What I keep telling myself as progress on the project is slow and work for all is clearly lacking. Focusing on interaction with the locals, and especially their kids keeps much of my focus in view. Overall, the trip has been wonderful. The education from human interaction and colloquial Spanish to the rich-poor disparity and the

beautiful archway that we climbed and took pictures. We finally met up with the rest of our group and STW treated us to a delicious meal. Afterwards, we took showers and made it back to the worksite for an extremely moving service. Although it was in Spanish, you could feel the warmth and sense of community in the air. It was apparent just how appreciated we are here in Santa Cruz.

This trip thus far has been completely eye opening for me. Seeing the children as well as the old women and men selling things in the market put things into perspective. As Americans', we're extremely privileged and take everything for granted. Everything seems to be so simple here and life is lived minute to minute. As stressful as that may sound to us, I think it's an interesting way to look at things. We all need to slow down and appreciate what we have and share everything we have to offer.

*1 up = getting big hugs from X-tina and Roxana

* 1 down = we leave in less than 4 days...

- Leah

Today was our second day off from working. It was again really nice to get away from the worksite. I think the markets have been some of the most eye opening parts of this trip. Everyone has said it, but I was so struck by how the children had to be the ones to work and attempt to sell us things. Before we left Mira told us we would see a large difference between rich and poor. At the time I had no idea what to expect. After seeing the houses on the lake that were obviously very nice juxtaposed with the towns where children were begging us to buy things was so extreme. I think that really helped me understand how important it is that we come here and build a school to attempt to bring some of these children out of these circumstances. In the markets I was again struck by how hard it was to say no to the kids selling in the markets.

The other major event of the day was getting a chance to attend the church service. I thought it was so wonderful to get a chance to be a part of the service and see how welcomed we were. Everyone was so welcoming and although I couldn't understand a majority of

American Highway (connecting the US, Mexico, Central America and South America) brought us to Panajachel—a town situated on Lago Atitlán.

In Panajachel, the older generation still speaks an indigenous language distinct from Spanish—one of the 21 indigenous Mayan languages spoken in rural Guatemala. Despite some foreign sounds, our Spanish still served us well when haggling and bargaining from traditional (yet touristic) Guatemalan paraphernalia—scarves, traditional grab, “pulceras,” (bracelets), hand-woven tablecloths and rugs, oil- paintings, and the like.

I was impressed with our group's success in dragging down the prices until we were at less than 10 or 20 dollars per item. Panajachel had a very different scene than Santa Cruz del Quiche. For the first time in a week, we encountered Americans on vacation, (more) expensive restaurants, western products and “MADE-IN-CHINA” – branded consumer goods. Unlike Santa Cruz del Quiche, where the children are curious but still polite, passive and hesitant to accept gifts from us (whether crayons, coloring pages or toothbrushes), the children of Panajachel were aggressive salesmen and women. They knew the essential English phrases—“one dollar!” and “Greengos!”—and were not afraid to be forward in trying to sell their parents' goods.

One of my favorite moments of the day was seeing the smiles on the faces of a number of children when Kevin gave them his leftover fries. For lunch, we each separated off into our small teams. My team (Cate's team) ate at a Uruguayan “Parilla” where we enjoyed sandwiches, flavorful meat and French fries for about \$5 each (~40 Quetzales).

After lunch, we were taken on a breathtaking boat ride on Lago Atitlán to admire the surrounding volcanoes and smaller secluded pueblos.

It seemed that everyone enjoyed the relaxing, sunny day on the lake. However, the little children begging for money left us with a feeling of hopelessness and questioning the morality of bargaining. In addition, our one hour and a half reflection time circled around the question: What is the best way to help the poor? Does giving money

perpetuate the cycle of poverty? Does tourism promote sustainable development?

Pauline

“Life gives you time and space—it’s up to you to fill it.” – Chinese Proverb

Coming back to Guatemala has been a joy and a challenge. Stepping back into a country here so many memories are still vivid, interacting again with the same staff, and living in this culture has caused me to be very reflective, introspective, and pensive.

I came upon this quote in my daily reading and it has increased (if possible) the reflection. Here in Guatemala we have had more time as we work, eat together, and evening reflections than we take in the states. As I have worked and lived on many service trips I continue to be encouraged by passion and dedication for so many students to come and serve over a break. The time spent fundraising, planning, meeting and traveling to Guatemala is probably three-fold over time in country. But yet the time we spend preparing to come here says a lot about our values. The hours of conversations we have had here without cell phones, internet, or T.V., has changed the way we spend our time. We’ve played games and more games, shared our stories and preferences, and been impassioned in discussions (tonight was the Wal-Mart- globalization debate). While service here is “spending our time well” and easy to make us feel superior; spending our time with each other and sharing with our Guatemalan hosts is just as essential. Taking time to make pancakes and attempt talking to Carmelena and Maribel in my week is time very well spent. Time spent working beside the pastor, Miguel, and the others helps us see things a new and make time count in new ways.

It is so easy in Guatemala to consider how I spend time and space is essential. The real challenge becomes the challenge to go home and continue to make time and space (and what I do within it) really matter in life. And I am building relationships and helping others or do I get focused upon myself and my daily life?

Coming back to Guatemala is challenging in ways that continues to push me. It challenges me by seeing children begging. It challenges me by using and reusing and rethinking materials. Guatemala con-

tinues to challenge me and that’s why I am thankful and blessed to come back.

-Mira

This is my first time to South America and the scenery has been absolutely breathtaking. After a few days of working we were able to go to the market. It was a very relaxing day and it was very interesting to see the culture, although it was very hard to see the little children begging for money and working really hard at their age. We were also able to take a boat ride and see the volcanoes. I also noticed some really beautiful large houses and Mario mentioned that they were mainly owned by Americans. That was also hard to hear because Guatemalans in the surrounding community lived in poverty. Before I came I was thinking about how much we were going to help these people, and after a few days of working I have realized how talented these workers are at what they do and how they are passionate about it. This has been a very humbling experience and I feel that they have given me more than I have given them. They have been so welcoming to us, calling us their brothers and sisters. I have been truly inspired. I hope these next couple of days that I can help them just as they have helped me.

Paige

Day 7: January 17, 2010

Today was very relaxing. We woke up at the same time as usual, ate breakfast (pancakes!) and made our way to Chichi to attend the market. It was so busy when we arrived. We decided to split into our groups in order to experience the most of the busy marketplace. The WOLFPACK traveled through all the different tents and aisles. It was amazing seeing all the different types of merchandise people were selling. I even saw a few women knitting and sewing the things that they were selling. We stumbled upon a ceremony where they were moving the saints from one church to another. Everyone was dressed up and there was music playing. They kept setting off fireworks. At some point we ended up walking with the parade in order to find our way out. Once we got out of the crowd we found this