**Day 1: Saturday, March 7, 2015**

Haosen

 Today is a long day for me, mostly because of the length of the drive. However, it was not as bad as I thought. One thing surprised me is that there are so many fast food restaurants in the South, and actually they are pretty good. Other than the food, I am really happy with the small trip to Knoxville, which allows me to peep what a big southern city looks like! I hope there will be more unexpected things happening in a positive way in the future.

Jackie

 Today marked the beginning of our week long journey down south. While the drive was long to get to Knoxville, it didn’t feel like it. At first I was wondering why we were stopping so much – why we weren’t in a bigger rush to get to TN. Then I realized that wee were focusing more on our place when we stopped. In Virginia (?) we stopped at a Waffle House – something I’ve always wanted to do. Then had a few gas stops, doors-are-still-open stops, and losing-other-van stops. Finally we got to Bojangle’s – which I had never heard of and envisioned some sort of deep fried Popeye’s type Southern cuisine. I was correct. Still feeling those biscuits. Going out and seeing Knoxville was super cool too (Thanks Pia!). I always love to see new cities and understand their cultures. Knoxville seemed to be a pretty hip up and coming hipster kingdom type place. Soffee shops, booming restaurants, and like music filled the streets with a happy manner. I’m looking forward to seeing Chatt tomorrow! I’ve heard so much about its amazing food + culture. Getting to know everyone has been great too, and I can’t wait to continue that throughout the trip.

Miranda

 I thought being in the car for 10 hours today was going to be a struggle, but it was a lot easier than expected. Even at 8am the atmosphere and the energy in the Kaufman parking lot woke me up and made me even more excited to start the journey. For the past few weeks I have been so stress out and I think it will be good for all of us to take this week and just not think about school. To just get away from it all and focus on the trip and doing something for the community. I am just even more excited to get to Alabama and get started. I also feel like the week is going to fly by, so it will be important to really take in every moment. I think this is going to be an extremely valuable experience for all of us and I can’t wait to get to know each person individually and as a group. I also think that our synchronized swimming skillz were on point tonight, so when we get back to campus I say we start a team. It’s only 11:19 and I am going to bed now… I haven’t gone to bed this early since winter break. Yay! Sleep! I can’t wait to embark on tomorrow’s adventure with you all! I would also like to apologize in advance for my spelling mistakes in my journal entries. I really do try to spell thing right, but sometimes it just doesn’t work out.

 Adios <3

**Day 2: Sunday, March 8, 2015**

Maureen

 Today we left Tennessee and made a stop in Chatanoga, where we walked around and went to a really hipster coffee shop. A little bit after getting coffee/lunch we went on an amazing hike at the top of a mountain at Point Park. After being in the car so much for the past two days it was a great chance to walk around and be outside. On the way to Alabama, the BoxVan got lost and we got to Upper Sand Mountain Parish and toured it with Chris. It was great to hear about what the Parish does and learn how much it does for the community. I am very excited to see how we can help during our stay!

 Once the BoxVan caught up with us, we set up in the house, then half of us went to Walmart. The people who stayed played a lot of catch/Frisbee/cow watching. When we got tired, we played a long game of Cards Against Humanity and bonded. After dinner, we had reflection and got to know each other better. I am most excited about helping the community here, and also bonding with everyone on the service trip because at school it can be difficult to break out of different friend groups – this is a great opportunity to see what people are like on their own. I’m very excited to see what the week brings!

Nick

 “A friend within a friend.”

 A funny thing happens when you go 50 min off the beaten path – all of a sudden, time stands still, panic levels rise, and finally, we have found peace?

 As Swaggy BoxVan Swaggy (before and after) stopped at the side of the road of Rt. 278, the music turned into a distraction and was immediately cut off, Nalani began profusely apologizing and unlike anything I had ever thought was the human tendency happened: no one freaked out or got upset. In an environment where each and every one of us had every reason to be upset, play the blame game, and turn the next 50 min and next 5 days into one hella awkward week – none of that happened.

 Yes, we had become close during those long 9 hours to Chattanooga, TN, but we still didn’t really know each other. Technically, we were friends that would not be terribly awful to each other, but we weren’t friends… we became friends because we made a choice, a choice to control our emotions and appeal to our good. We all made a choice to not jump down each other’s throats, but rather to collaborate. Through collaboration, we found peace. We found a way to work together, and to go one extra step and begin to be ourselves. Okay, maybe that was a little too dramatic, but yet it is true, once we started driving the other way, the attitude of the van went from “Well, I guess we’ll ride in BoxVan” to “I’m glad I’m here with you guys.” We all started to let our true colours show and 50 min felt like 5. I felt like I had known Nalani, Jackie, Carrie, and Pia my entire life, and we were merely taking a quick drive to a service trip.

 Later in our group reflection, Carrie had her Delta as that story I have just told you. I have the utmost confidence that it will hold true. It has only been a couple days and at 11:53pm we’ve got a cabin full of people making weird noises in a desperate attempt to get some fun and sleep on this trip. I believe ti is possible, and I hope everyone believes I am well, because if it works out, then that would be pretty awesome.

 Inception time: a reflection within a reflection. What this little story did was inspire me. It gave me hope at an unmeasurable level, and is something I have been searching for. As I reflect on this day, I begin to put together the pieces for why humans are inherently good; why, in a time of desperation and panic, a van full of “friends” became friends.

 Thank you Swaggy BoxVan Swaggy for giving me hope for this trip. Hope that we all can find a way to be ourselves, work together, and discover joy. Oh, and one last thing…

 A friend within a friend

 Turned the switch in my head,

 That we all have choices to make,

 Of who we are, what we stand for, and who we want to be.

 A friend within a friend is the best kind around,

 It inspires, motivates, and changes our judgments.

 A friend within a friend breaks the barriers we have,

 And opens a door to a place unknown.

 Most of all, we are all “friends” to each other,

 But it is up to us if we want to be friends.

 A choice like this isn’t that hard,

 Just open your heart, close your eyes, and trust yourself.

 My friends are: Austin, Nalani, Saadia, Nate, Haosen, Carrie, Jackie, Pia, Matt, Issac, Maureen, Macey, Liza, and Miranda. We are all different, but we made a choice – a choice we can all make, everytday. All we have to do is be a friend within a friend, and let our true selves shine ☺

 \*So like real talk, I don’t think the coffee is wearing off, because I feel like I can still write another 50 pages…. Help! \*

 -Nick Rejebian ☺

PS Coffee: Much wow, so energy, yummmmm!

#DsonBama2015

#Squad

#BoxVanSwag

#Chat

#AllTheHashtags

Macey Cohen

 Today we walked around Chatanooga (hopefully nobody judges me for spelling) where we stopped for coffee at Brash. We went to lunch at Jimmy John’s and played Mind Meld (?), which we need to do more often. Austin found a great lookout mountain thing, and it was nice to spend some time “hiking” after the long car rides we have had. Going there was the foreshadowing for the rest of the drive because BoxVan was lost a few times. We have decided to create a sitcom, possibly with Boxcar starring as the slacker in his group of friends. Once we got to ‘Bama, we met Chris and he told us all about the Parish and some of the work we might do this week, which seemed to get a lot of people excited. Once BoxVan reached the CORRECT destination, we went to our home for the week and made it cozy. Then some people went to Walmart to buy enough food to feed our small army, while the rest of us played catch and Cards Against Humanity. That was a great way to get to know each other more since we had spent so much time in small cars. I really enjoyed seeing people get competitive (possibly only me ☺) and just relax. It was also Carrie’s first time playing Cards Against Humanity, and I think we have converted her into a believer. Once the food returned, we made Grilled Cheese with personality, and tomato soup with water. The Dinner Crew also gave a great performance to entertain the group waiting to eat. To end the night, we spent some time getting to know each other and telling each other the personality traits that we love about others from what we know about them already.

**Day 3: Monday, March 9, 2015**

Isaac

 What a lovely experience was shared on this day, with the whole group waking up by 7 o’ clock. By 8:05 we had successful ate breakfast, packed lunches, and arrived at the parish headquarters. At this point in the day a split was inevitable in our all-star, 15- man squad. Group Austin stayed at the parish to assist with the distribution of seeds/fertilizer and begin the work on the playground while the courageous Team Nalani traversed back to the chapel in order to enter the horror-show that is located directly under the floorboards, with the end-goal of fixing the hot-water plumbing. After a delightful lunch back at the parish headquarters, all members of the 15-person squad journeyed back to the chapel. Little did we know what was in store. The task was installing insulation, the mission nearly impossible. Hours upon hours were spent in a fiberglass, mud, and water cesspool; however, the brave members emerged victorious, having insulated the floor, with the assistance of staple-guns and duct-tape. This historic feat was coupled with the construction of a ping-pong table, which was then later utilized during out “relaxation period.” The day was capped off with a human cinnamon roll, deep conversations, a late night McFlurry/Shamrock shake run, and an even later-night session of Cards Against Humanity. Getting to know people seems to be a reason that many of us chose to come on a service trip and I think the “question activity” provided us awesome opportunities to get to know each other more. Additionally,, getting to work today has made me look forward to our activities for the coming days, and I know that we are all looking forward to doing whatever we can.

Only Day 3? - Pia

 Wow! I just cannot believe that it’s only Monday. How is it possible that we only left 3 days ago? I feel like I have been on this trip for a very long time (in a good way) and as if I’ve known everyone here for a really long time.

 I’ve been a little skeptical about switching who is in what car all the time, but I have found to love it. Every morning, every leg, every drive I get closer with someone new. Swaggy BoxVan will forever be an absolutely amazing experience and memory and I can’t describe how grateful I am to have been able to experience it, but every other carried has also had its perks. Today Austin and Saadia were able to experience what the BoxVan Life is like and I hope that more/everyone will be able to. It’s about taking every situation as an opportunity. As a chance to make the best out of whatever will happen next. We can’t control what will happen next or what door will open up with new possibilities. We can’t plan responses or reactions. We can only prepare to make the best out of it. I’ve definitely taken the first step to being able to do that (thanks to BoxVan)!

 At the end of the day yesterday, Matt proposed another great game to the group. When everyone was lying in bed and the lights were off, Matt suggested that we all make (funny) sounds. It was great fun and lasted a long time. At the end of every session, everyone was laughing because of the ridiculous noises and sounds everyone made. Around midnight, this actually slowed down and we fell asleep pretty quickly.

 You could tell that it had been midnight by the way everyone woke up this morning. Nick as our little sunshine and Nalani were probably the loudest and happies people. When we left for the parish, everyone was up, awake, and excited. There, we split up into Team Nalani and Team Austin. After a deciding game of rock, paper, scissors, Austin’s team (which I am part of) stayed to organize and hand out seeds, repaint the playground, and build cupboards for an upcoming sale. It was great. I loved seeing how different everyone was who came to pick up seeds. Some were nicely put together, elderly women, others seemed to be from further out in the country and missing teeth.

 I loved seeing the variety of people we were helping and even talking to some of them about their personal lives (as far as I understood because I’m still no expert in Southern accent). Mr. Oz also shared a lot about his time as a veteran with us, which was incredible to hear.

 Matt and I became a great team putting together a cupboard/closet and had a really powerful conversation. I loved it and hope to have many more like this with everyone else on the team. In the afternoon, we played football, which was great and also set up a ping pong table.

 Tonight after cooking (and slightly burning some of the) dinner, we split up into pairs and talked about talking points Nalani gave us. Macey and I really connected and I can’t wait to become better friends with her. We’re just really similar and – getting back to where I started tonight – I feel like I’ve known her for a really long time.

 I’m looking forward to how the next few days are going to be.

 Maybe we’ll even get some sleep?

 Pia

Matt

 It’s rare to have a chance to really meet someone. To an extent, we do it everyday with a friendly hello or nod of the head. We do it when we share a common interest or space, but these remain superficial. They can eventually lead to a more profound understanding, but that takes time and patience on the part of both people (or groups). Sometimes we shy away from ourselves: our faults, our mistakes, our triumphs, our history, and that tiny part that makes us who we are. I’ve done this most of my life. I don’t open up, which has, in the past, lead me to miss out on some amazing opportunities. Tonight, when we all shared honest parts of our lives with people we just met, I made a connection, not only with Nick, but myself. Shortly after, I found myself calling my dad to tell him that he was my role model, as I stood in the rain in front of a McDonald’s. I didn’t know who my role model was until tonight. These moments, big and small, occurred throughout the day. I spoke with Delbert and Oz about the area, and with Pia about religion, people, Dickinson, and the surprises within every individual’s life. I didn’t have many expectations about this trip, but I could not have imagined the amount of personal discovery that would happen in 3 days. I hated Dickinson to the point that I tried to transfer. I ended up going abroad now in Alabama. In these two years, I’ve met wonderful people and I hope to continue meeting and learning about people until I die. Finally, I’ve been worried that after this year, my education would stop, that I couldn’t learn without an academic setting. People promote education on an individual level. A five minute conversation, a real talk (as it were), could have tremendous dialogue and discussion. Hopefully, these thoughts are coherent enough to follow and not just words thrown onto a page. They come from a place of honesty. This is an amazing experience on an individual and group level.

 All the best,

 Matt Attwood

**Day 4: Tuesday, March 10, 2015**

Liz

 Today was definitely the most draining so far! Both physically and mentally.

 At the beginning of reflection, we talked about things that we would like to change, and our highs of the day. I had so many highs that it felt like it didn’t all happen today. Even now to think about it, I am blurring the days together. It is weird to think that it is only Tuesday, and already so much has happened.

 I was so self-conscious coming into this service trip that I contemplated not coming at all. But honestly, I am so glad that I did. Not only am I proud of the work I am doing, but I’m proud that I was able to break out of my Dickinson and Posse bubbles and bond and have dialogue with amazing people.

 Talking at reflection really hit home for so many reasons. We talked about race relations and many more things, but race relations is and always has been so important to me. I firmly believe that dialogue is so so so important when it comes to race, and not talking about it is just so wrong. So being able to be able to talk about race openly and respectfully was just perfect.

 Another topic that came up was religion. I felt so happy that people were trusting with their stories. I am a person who is very closed off until I trust a person enough. But the trust in this group has been such a beautiful thing to see. Religion is an extremely personal part of someone’s life, and someone being able to share this made me so happy and so sad to hear that they have ever gone through hardships. When they share these things, I cry because I hate when anyone is in pain or is hurt. Especially now that I know these people personally, it hurts to hear their stories of times when life was difficult for them.

 I hope that the bonds we formed here last and that this isn’t only for the week.

 I love my BAM FAM!

 -Liz ☺

Carrie

 Ahhh. First of all, I’ve confirmed that I am emotionally constipated – a very valuable thing to realize (sorta forgot we were gonna be sharing these but #noregrets). This trip doe:

 First of all, I’m so thankful for community. I’m thankful for the sense of relief after you realize how much people can rock. The people on this trip have a unique combination of insight, poise, and fun-loving-ness. I’m sort of intoxicated by the vibe of this trip. I feel a high from the service we are providing to Alabama, but in turn to each other.

 Like Chris says, we can break bread because we are one. WE are able to recognize our unity by disassembling our many perspectives. Our identifies are so complex, but we have so much in common, too.

 I’m so insanely glad I came on this trip. The sexual jokes are overwhelmingly wonderful, and I’m so glad we all go to Dickinson. #we’regonnahavewickedreunions #swaggyboxvan

 -Carrie

Nate

 We did more work at Uppse Sand Mountain today. The morning was spent distributing seeds, cleaning out a van, sorting yams and apples, and finally helping to put clothes on hangers for the thrift shop. Isaac and I shared a moment in some nightgowns. Oz invited us over for lunch, which included ribs, salad, potatoes, and cake. It was an incredible shared experience. After lunch, one group distributed food in a small community, another baked (?) cardboard, and Isaac and I helped unload and put away a food shipment. I was struck by how much of the food was baked goods. We went to Chris’ church for a dinner of soups. The group distributed themselves among the community members. It seems like everyone had really nice conversations. Chris led a service, which was incredibly warm, welcoming, and surprising. After dinner, we returned to Hollins Chapel, where we had the most emotional reflection of the trip so far. The deep respect and empathy the group showed to one another was incredible. We discussed the Civil War, the South, and religion. I wish I would have spoken up and shared more, but was too moved by the others speaking. We de-escalated the emotions with a cinnamon roll hug and ended the evening with massages and ping pong. What an incredible day.

 Nate

**Day 5: Wednesday, March 11, 2015**

Saadia

 About four years ago around this time, I was a freshman at Providence College, on a spring break service trip to Lenoir, North Carolina, working with Habitat for Humanity. The contrasts between that experience four years ago and my experience now as I write this are many: being a student on a trip versus being an administrator; a less formed sense of self versus one that is (relatively) more confident and assured. The greatest difference, however, is the sense of connection I feel with those whom I share this cabin and this week with; such bonds were sorely lacking with my service trip experience as a student, primarily due to differences of race and socioeconomic status (I actually connected more with a service trip group from a different college than with students from my own college). But here, in this moment and in the moments leading up to this, I feel a sense of belonging with the greater group dynamics as well as a substantial connection and comfort with each individual person. I’m not sure at this point in time that I can point to a specific instance or circumstance that began and continues this, but at this moment in time, I am incredibly grateful for these moments, these conversations, and these people.

 During our community service today, I was reminded of a lesson I initially learned in classes for my Public and Community Service Studies minor, which is that community service just as much, if not more so, entails building relationships, partnerships, and connections with members of the community – and listening to stories about themselves, their communities, their joys, and their struggles – as it does completing the tasks themselves, as these sometimes can be taken care of with time and resources. It is through the connections made while doing community service together that brings about the connections and collaborations needed to pursue social justice that addresses and tackles the causes rather than the symptoms alone.

 Peace & prayers,

 Saadia

Nalani

 Being part of a group is always an experience that requires great observation, understanding, and patience. However, with this group, I have found observation, understanding, and patience naturally due to my great respect for each individual and the way that each individual treats others. Our group is truly diverse, perhaps not in the typical understanding of the word, but in perspectives, histories, and talents. When combined, our group, as a unit, is a formidable force. However, instead of instilling fear, there is great love and kindness and genuineness. Yet, simultaneously, our group shares core values that motivate us to an extent that can only come from true passion for enhancing the quality of life for others, whether it is each other or people in the community or even ourselves. I truly believe we are all here for a reason, and that reason is to make the world a better place. And, in all honesty, I feel the changes we are making, in every smile. I am truly grateful for this group of individuals and the collective unit we have kindled.

Austin

 After an amazing reflection the night before, we awoke the next morning to get started on our work for the day. It was really rainy, dreary, and foggy, but none of us cared as we set out for the drive to the parish. When we got there, we helped Ben unload the church van with some trash and used materials from the parish warehouse. From there, we split into two different groups, one to another Upper Sand Mountain warehouse and another to a house that would be a long-term rehabilitation project. I spent the morning at the warehouse and the afternoon working on the house. Although there wasn’t very much work to do, I tried to keep myself busy by sorting and painting.

 In spite of the slow pace of work, there were a lot of things that I really enjoyed today. For lunch, we were treated to a meal at the parish. There was also a service at the parish, which I really enjoyed. They read a passage from 1 Corinthians chapter 13, which is actually my favorite verse in the Bible. It was cool to hear the preacher speak about charity and love in a way that was so warm and welcoming. Another thing I loved was going through the area to drive after we finished work. Our group first stopped at the grocery store and gas station to fill up on fuel and supplies there. We ran into Oz as well, which was really cool! He invited us to come to breakfast with him the next morning, which we happily agreed to. After we picked up supplies and returned to the chapel, we all split off and went exploring in different directions. I was in BoxVan with Nick, and we drove to a state park and explored near the lake as well.

 We enjoyed softshell tacos for dinner and then dove into reflections. Our reflections were brief, but it was really great to check in to see how everybody was feeling. Overall I’ve just been so amazed at how close-knit our group has become in a short amount of time. We’ve shared a lot with each other and I am confident that we’ll form bonds that will last long after we leave.

 -Austin

**Day 6: Thursday, March 12, 2015**

Haosen

 Days passed fast. There are only three days left for the trip. So far, I enjoyed all my experiences except the car ride.

 In terms of today, it was just great. A bunch of cooking crews got up early and helped with the breakfast at Oz’s. We saw a beautiful sunrise. Then after the work in the morning, we went to a BBQ place to taste Southern style burgers with a half pound of meat, it was really satisfying! As we discussed before, we took half a day off in the afternoon to experience the Southern nature. In fact, it was really eye-opening. Based on what I have experienced these days, I had a really bad impression of sustainability in the South. However, when we were at Little Canyon, we were surprised by their idea of sustainability, even though I thought this funding should be better used to spread this idea is to common people rather than to be proud of saying how sustainable this building is. Because when I looked around in the South about their polluting actions, I felt his words were ironic.

 Nonetheless, I had a great day. At night, we discussed a graph connecting to society. I think this approach is really interesting and it is totally different from the teaching method in China. It is a great experience to me.

Miranda

 #mrcleanrightbehindyou #currysquad #moose #theminipigisreal 🡨 but 4 realz

So many #’s have been created on this trip, I didn’t think it was possible. There are just new ones every day! Besides the hashtags, a lot has happened in the past 6 days. I’ve learned that Isaac doesn’t eat tofu, that Carrie is emotionally constipated, that Maureen speaks Russian, and that every individual in this group is just as weird as me. The weirdness level is just amazing and I love it. Another incredible thing that I’ve learned on this trip is the ability to put trust in a person who I have known for less than a week. It has always been difficult for me to trust others, simply because I feel as though I have been let down too many times. But something this trip has shown me is that if you show an openness to learn and share with others, you don’t need to necessarily trust them, but have a mutual understanding that the other person is sharing something important to you. Sorry, this is kind of a rant of brain farts, I don’t even know if it makes sense. While I like to think that I have my thoughts together, I know that most of the time they really only make sense in my head.

I am kind of sad that we are going to be going back to school soon, but I know that this experience will not stop once we leave Alabama. The bonds we have formed throughout the week will continue once we get back to school, and it will only make our college experience better. I also think we should make a CD of all the classic car songs we have been listening to and we should call it Bama.

When I get back to school I am going to sleep for 15 hours no problem… #sleepdeprived

Xoxo,

Miranda

Jackie

 Today we were welcomed into Mr. Oz’s house at a bright and early 8 o’clock. I was surprised to hear that his salsa was made from his own garden, which is so awesome and sustainable that I felt right at home. After we worked with the seeds for a while (played kickball), we rode away with Chris to a burger joint about an hour away. While I’m not one for the burger, I heard they were very good. My grilled cheese was on point: after phase 1 of the adventure, we went to Little Canyon National Park, which was unbelievably impressive. Seeing something so breathtaking was unexpected in this part of the world, so I was pleasantly surprised to see an enormous waterfall, complete with a drizzle of rain and fog in the sky. Something interesting about this place was the aspect of sustainability. The building, the nature center, was LEED certified, had environmental education programs, and promoted sustainability in a non-abrasive way in the middle of Alabama. I was surprised.

 During reflection we mentioned the wealth disparity between this place and the surrounding areas of poverty. While I see the issues in this, I believe that there are always sacrifices and disparities when it comes to prioritizing an issue. While there are absolutely many suffering people here, I see this national park as a way of improving the surrounding area, instead of taking away from it. This is often a struggle for me, as my major challenges me to poetize things like this. However, it was a very interesting and practical application of my background and work in sustainability. My time here has turned into something unfathomable and I see myself growing so much through it.

**Day 7: Friday, March 13, 2015**

Maureen

 It’s so weird to think that we are already leaving Alabama tomorrow, this week has been such an adventure I feel like every day has been filled with so much that it can’t have happened in such a short time. Today was a great summary of our time in Alabama. This morning, Pia, Matt, Nick, Carrie, Austin and I woke up extra early to see the sunrise and take pictures. Even though it was too cloudy to actually see anything, I loved the spontaneity, and our trip has had so many random adventures like this. At the warehouse, we moved clothes we had sorted the day before to the parish, and it felt great to feel like we accomplished a particular task. Lunch was fun, as always; everyone here has been so inviting and warm so it was only the second time that we packed our own lunches. Since we finished working, Ben recommended a park to us which was just what we needed. The park had a beautiful stream, multiple swing sets, and a lot of paths. It was really great to unwind, and I surprisingly enjoyed this park more than the national park because it was more interactive and we had more freedom to explore. Dinner today was such a high point because both dinner teams worked together to make our meal, and we had such interesting conversations. I’m so happy that the white van got stuck in the mud the other day, because Tim, the guy who helped them out, was so refreshing. I loved hearing about his plans for an organic farm, and it gives me hope that he can bring better sustainable practices to the area. While I’m sad that this week is ending soon, I’m looking forward to the drive back and being on campus with everyone. ☺

Nick

 Live a good life – that is what we are all taught to do from an early age; and whether that includes wealth, friends, family, etc., a good life is what we thrive for. Over the past week, we have taken a step forward into what a good life can look like by experiencing joy.

 Joy is more than happiness. It is a feeling of unmeasurable happiness to which you react with a level of thanks, appreciation, and love. Today, as we winded down our last day in #Bama, I saw joy twinkle in everyone’s eyes as we left with a bang. What is the best part about joy is that it cannot be explained. It is a series of moments that are unparalleled and unique that cannot be relived. It is something that we experience, and cannot be explained unless you were looking at it through my eyes. And that is what makes it so special. Our day, our week, have been full of joy, and each and every one of us has seen it differently. We all experienced it in minutely different ways but are united by the moments of community. It gives me great pleasure to make this reflection a question rather than a statement: did you live the good life today? Why? This question answers this reflection per every experience, because it enables me to respond with an affirmative yes, because I know a strong bond developed within the group. That is all I can write because my true answer would be pages. Eventually, to anyone else, my joy is unique to me and is calculated successfully (?). But everyone knows when someone is “feeling the joy” because you see it in their eyes and hearts. Joy is our true human virtue, and as I conclude this reflection, it is so relieving to say that today, and for the rest of my life, I will remain in the mindset of joy I experienced on this trip, and do my best to keep it every single day.

 Thank you Swaggy BoxVan, and Bama 2015, for developing joy for us all on this trip. Joy is truly an awesome feeling. Forever in my heart will I remember ☺

 Love,

 Nick Rejebian

Macey

 Waking up this morning, everyone was excited to get dirty and work hard, but I think today was more about reflecting. We cleaned the warehouse, found another mouse, and we were more productive than Ben had been in 3 years. Even if it seemed like we had only moved boxes from one wall to another, we made Ben’s job a lot easier. We also cleaned the warehouse at the Parish, found another mouse (common theme), and attempted a game of sardines. At lunch, we played a word association game, getting to know each other even more than we had before. We got to go to Bucks Point Park and look at the river, play on the playground like children, and play “football,” which was a sad way to dsicver that we should not be allowed to play ever again. Other than that, the park was amazing, and a great way to distress after a tiring week. Then we prepped our dinner party and ate with our new friends. Personally, I had a great conversation with Oz, and I know everyone else had amazing conversations with Tim, Chris, and his daughters, and I hope we can continue these friendships when we get back to Dickinson. After an emotional reflection, we went on a walk. If I forgot what exactly we talked about on our walk, I won’t care because I think that I will always remember how I felt walking with people that will hopefully be part of my life forever. I don’t know what else to write, but if you read this, I want you to know that I am grateful for the opportunity to have gotten to know you. I would also like you to know that I am terrible at spelling and grammar, and am very impressed if you understand what I am trying to say. If you ever question how we helped during this time, think of the friendships we have made and the impact we have had on each other.

 Macey ☺