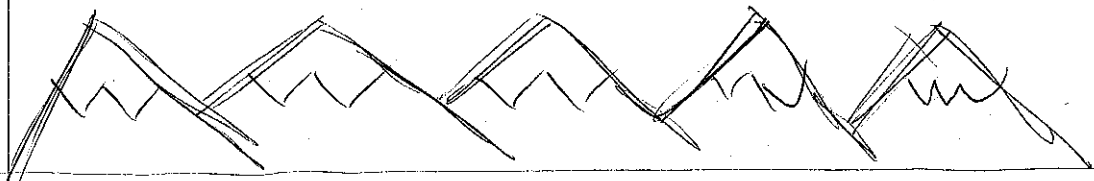


Mountain Mamas

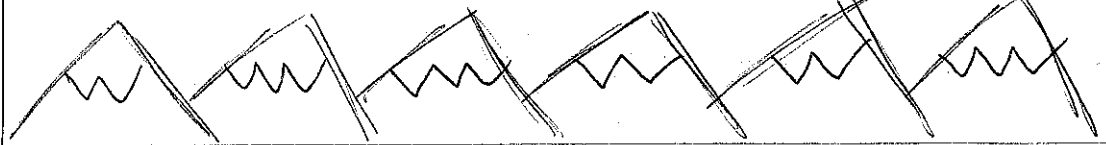
3/12

on the 2018 Spring Break Service
to West Virginia morale is high.
The first day consisted of driving
through winding mountain
getting to know the small
of Elkins, WV a little too well.
Arrival at the Guyan Valley
Chia Service Project Center was
with relief as we had been out
range of cell towers for several
days. Private Investigator Jess Bell
the day by finding not only
existence of a local pizza joint, but
the highly secretive Wifi password.
This made our bunk room as cozy
as possible while Jack was sent to
new friends in the guys' room. We
a lazy morning on day 2 while
me + Annie trekked to the nearest
port, which was an hour away.



It was so great to get the opportunity to explore West Virginia's natural beauty. We spend a considerable time basking in the sun, knowing that we might not see the sun again until the end of the week. The week's "official" activities commenced Sunday evening with dinner + introduction to projects. We learned that we were going to be working with Pam + David, a couple who lives about ten minutes from the ASP center. We were quickly overwhelmed by the slew of construction vocabulary that came our way in the descriptions of our tasks. It was pretty clear that no one had any experience with fascia, underpinning or soffit. It was only a matter of time before we would become experts.

Today was our first days of construction + we all seemed to have a great experience. This speaks a lot to the positivity + chemistry within our group because the weather was not an over



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side. We spent the morning mastering all things underpinning - fascia in the cold rain but we had a blast. My work crew (Karen, Cheyenne, Favi + Chuck) got into a real groove which was a long way from where we started. We sang, danced + "wood"ed our way through cutting, screwing + nailing our V-channels. A big highlight of the day was David + Pam inviting us into their home for dinner. They made a huge meal of pasta, salad, potatoes + cake. It was a real gesture of Southern Hospitality + an awesome opportunity to get to know them + their family.

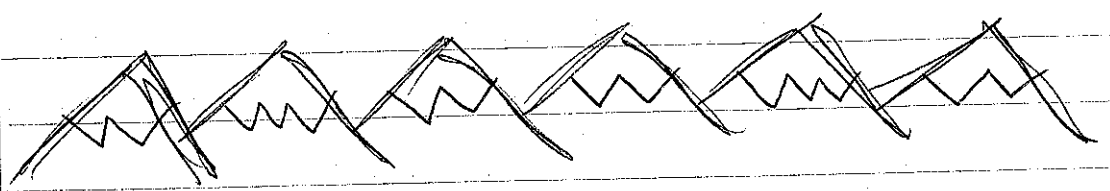
When reflecting on air time out in the community of Guyan Valley, I've thought a lot about my pre-conceived notions of Appalachian communities. Seeing Confederate flags, shooting ranges + ubiquitous religious messages has made me uncomfortable, as I typically associate these symbols with political + moral views different

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than my own. It has been difficult for me to reconcile these judgements with the kindness of all of the people we have interacted with. It makes me think of the quote "hate generalizes, love specializes." I'm looking forward to getting to know the area more deeply + coming to terms with some of the judgements that I have developed throughout my life. On a more concrete level, I'm so excited to make significant progress on the underpinning project, gaining some construction experience along the way. Most of all, I can't wait to get to know this eclectic group of Dickinsonians who have (allegedly) made crack up at all of their antics. Cheers to this exciting + meaningful week!



3/13

Tuesday - our fourth day at Appalachia Service Project (ASP), but second day of work. Day started early at 7:15 am with music and dancing right outside our room (Beyonce early in the morning). After breakfast and 4-5 layers of shirts, hoodies, jackets, and what not, we were prepared to restart the drilling and hammering in 30th °F weather. After the rain and snow from the day before, we were pretty much ready for anything. Despite working outside under almost freezing conditions, it has been a great experience both days with these amazing people from Dickinson. Also got to talk some Biochemistry with a senior from Nazareth College last night. Living together with all these people from different schools who've come together with one purpose - to serve, to be of help for someone in need - the cold, snow, construction, everything seems easy to deal with. The main reason we've all come here is to gain new experience and perspective as we serve and a little pain or discomfort now will be part of fond memories later on. Dancing to music in the car played by our awesome DJ,

Cheyenne, hammering away on top of ladders as the rest support you and crack jokes, counting out Val's 5-6 layers of clothing, playing different games and laughing and bonding over the silliness is all amazing and I would not have wanted to miss a single thing. Even as I sit here writing away, I can hear Lizzi's laughter coming out of the girls' room as the others join in. It's astounding how everyone has something amusing, interesting and funny to make every situation memorable.

Besides the ^{Dickinson} people, who as you can tell by now, are amazing, the locals we've met so far have also been nothing but wonderful. Pam, the person whose house we've been working on made an entire meal for us yesterday and then soup today. Honestly, I had no idea what to expect about West Virginia when I signed up to come here. I'd seen the cities and the suburbs in the US, but what does rural poverty actually look like here? That was eth I was very interested in. In terms of political beliefs, the Confederate flags seen all over had formed a certain perception in all our minds,

but and the extreme religiousness was starting to make me uncomfortable, but Pam's hospitality really melted my heart. It was just so unexpected. And David, Pam's husband was an equally nice guy. He One thing that kind of stuck was when he asked if we all went to Church. But when we told him that there were people from all diff. belief systems in the group, his answer was very accepting and he was pretty casual about how everyone has their own way of doing things. I was a little uncertain and uncomfortable when he asked the question, but his reaction made me question myself. I had come with the hope of learning. Does learning not mean having an open mind? But I had already got some preconceived notions about this part of the country and the people here. How wrong was I?

Even the cooks here, two nice old ladies are amazing. One of their daughters is a smart little one. We had post dinner clean-up and the way she was showing us around, assigning work, it was wonderful. Meeting new people, making connections, learning new things, breaking stereotypes, I believe I have managed to

accomplish all these things and it hasn't even been 5 days. How much more do I have to learn?

The weather's supposed to be cold only until tomorrow, so that's great. And the sun was out today, such a wonderful feeling. We're making progress with the roof-work, learning quite a few new words, f-channel, sub-facia, feel like we could even be pros by the end of the week. Also, another new and totally unexpected part of this trip - Annie. She's a DPS officer and she's one of the most amazing people ever. "Just acquaintances", but still great to get to know her. And the entire team. They've been wonderful so far, and so much fun. The group dynamics is amazing. It's almost time for dinner, so going to sign off now. Looking forward to making more memories with this bunch!! And cheers to our leaders - Carolyn & Cheyenne.

- Simona Bajgai

SNOW DAY!



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Janeen Hoang
March 14, 2018

Today is day five! We stayed in at ASP's center because they called a snow day. I was a little bummed that we couldn't go out & work, but today was fun regardless. It's weird because you want to go out & work, but at the same time it's so cold you don't want to leave your bed (even though our room is freezing). We had breakfast together & we played some games & some of us (Val & me) took 3 hour naps! After dinner there was a documentary that talked about the coal industry specifically in West Virginia. It was an optional viewing in the cafeteria but most of us watched in ~~since~~ we were playing Uno before the ASP staff put on the documentary. We talked about the documentary as a group afterwards / just about the snow

day we had. I'm once again thankful today to be on this trip with such beautiful people

I've been amazed at the sheer # of trees here. Fun fact I learned is that all these trees are new! All the old ones were chopped down. HEARST!

who give me a space to be myself & give me a space to share & embody those experiences. The group always jokes



around with each other, but when we get together for our group discussion, everyone takes it seriously & everyone is taken seriously & I really appreciate that aspect of the experience that I've had so far with the group.

→ Things about West Virginia:

We spent time yesterday & today unpacking some things that we learned or experienced during our time here. We talked about class, race, education, personal experiences; and I find that these conversations are very important to have. For all the fun that you have on a service trip, it's also important to remember & reflect on why we even need to be here in the first place — why ~~this~~ this community needs help from others & how it got to be like this. So I'm glad that we always devote time to unpack ~~the~~ new experiences & knowledge together & in the process grow with everyone in the group.

→ I think that the main themes we touched on today ~~was~~ were 1) unplowed roads & what that meant for people & their livelihoods & 2) the coal mining industry + corporate power + pushback from ~~the~~ environmental movements.

→ It's really interesting how ~~the~~ ^{my} environmental science studies shows up on ~~my~~ trip & the trip I went on to Detroit last spring break. Last year, it was about food justice & here, it's environmental injustices & the pollution of air & waterways, in addition to unsustainable practices like mountaintop removal & clearcutting in the past that compound those injustices.

→ Although it was nice to sleep in today, I'm so excited to get back to work & finish the underpinning job with Cheyenne, Fari, Val, Sara, & Chuck, so that we can start the grading project hopefully. I adore everyone on this trip for all the laughs we've shared & for all their kindness. I think everyone functions well together & I'm grateful to have such an amazing group of people to have my back!! There's no other people that I'd rather cut vinyl with & subar & J-channel with. I love that I met everyone by coming on this trip & I'm very proud of the work that we are doing here. I can't imagine spending my spring break any other way.

(Also today was ~~thursday~~ ^{wednesday} & we all wore our blue service trip shirts :))

Also @ Cheyenne, Carolyn, Fari, Jess, Jack, Simona, Val, Sara, Chuck, Annie, Lizzie. I love you all. - Karen

march, 15

Thursday - It was nice to be able to get back to work after spending yesterday stuck inside. Although the day initially started out cold, it gradually began to warm up. At around noon there were no clouds in the sky and it really helped keep morale high. The group that was working on the underpinnings finished up and it allowed us to spread everyone out to work on the roof. Today's work began to really show how much everyone has bonded over the course of the trip. Everyone had a great time while they were working and we were all constantly laughing. In addition, we have all gotten the hang of the construction we need to do and it has really helped us complete the work faster. Despite the fact that we lost a day due to the snow we have made a ton of progress. Later in the day students from Stoney Brook came to help out with our construction. They really struggled to get anything done and it made all of us feel better about how well we were doing. For dinner there was burgers and hot dogs which were all done very well. Afterwards, our chore for the day was to clean the bathrooms which was a wonderful time and everyone enjoyed it. Overall, everyone is excited to continue working but sad because it is

also our last day. We all knew that it will be a lot of fun so it is keeping our spirits up. This was my first ever journal entry so I hope it wasn't too bad.

-Jack Williamson

Our final day of WV

Annex Demmy

Friday (3/16): Today was our last day working on David & Bams base. Everyday since being here, the team has had a "go get it" attitude. Today you could tell everyone was eager & motivated to finish what we started. When we got to the worksite, everyone quickly found some way to participate & work on the base. I bounced back & forth helping where I could. I mainly spent the morning writing down measurements for Liz. When we first started working around 9am, it was about 30 degrees outside. About an hour & a half into working, the sun came out & brought us so much energy. We decided to minimize our lunch break to only 30 min. so we had more time to work. Although we didn't finish all of our work on the base, our team did amazing work throughout the week & left with unforgettable bonds with each other & the family of the home.

Being young & a newer employee of Dickinson, I was a little nervous to

be an admin. for this trip. I wasn't sure how the students would react having a DPS officer with them, but I knew I wanted to build new relationships with the students. With my job at the college, I don't always get to have positive interactions with the students. I looked at this as a chance to build a positive relationship between DPS & Dickinson Students. It was a decision I won't ever regret. The bonds I formed on this trip with the students is something I will cherish. I learned so much from them including things about their hometowns, friends, family, majors, & experiences at Dickinson. They have taught me different ways to interact with a wide variety of people. We overcame obstacles together & became a WV family. My week was full of laughs & great experiences that I can't wait to share with my friends, family, & co-workers!

Friday
March 16, 2018

Cheyenne Bailey

Being the student leader of this trip was even more than I thought it would be. Prior to the trip, I was anxious about what the role entailed. I had no clue the pressure of making sure everyone ~~was~~ ^{was having} an enjoyable ^{time} and learning experience. I knew that it involved me being vulnerable in front of people I did not know. It involved my unlearning of structures and stereotypes and letting the guard that I've had up to protect myself, down. It wasn't easy. To say that I was not uncomfortable or conflicted within myself and my environment would be a lie. Yet, this uncomfortability has produced so much growth, and it has become easier to navigate and embrace with every trip I've been involved in. I knew that Carolyn and I would have a great dynamic because we're obsessed with each other, and I am grateful for her for making this experience even brighter. I am also grateful to the group for allowing me the space to be vulnerable and be real with my feelings. My identity is so

important to me, so being black in a whitespace and an area with a lot of confederate flags threw me off my equilibrium. It was different from my last service trip where I was in a predominantly black space and experiencing their struggles. I was more at home.

I, however, knew that mentioning things such as the flags, the statues, and my interactions with police in the area would challenge them to see past their own comfort/discomfort and to make connections. To see them challenging themselves and pushing boundaries was the most satisfying feeling. And it was also great to see the people that we fought to be on this trip becoming everything we envisioned and MORE.

Initially, I was nervous about the dynamic of the group. We have such a mixture of personalities, but one commonality stands, they are LEADERS and CHANGEMAKERS. I was able to witness greatness in

each and every person on this trip, and it was powerful. To think of how capable these 11 folk are to change and alter the environment around them is easy because they've made a huge impression on my life. What's most impressive is the fact that their very presence on this trip is an act of RESISTANCE. SERVICE is justice, whether that is food, education, or poverty, these folk worked to make some sort of difference despite the structures in ~~place~~ place. They could've adhered to the apathetic culture that plagues our school and nation when it comes to social justice and service, yet they made the leap and I hope it was worthwhile.

I am eager to see how these relationships will translate back on Dickinson's campus. I know for myself, service trips gave me the community I've never felt at Dickinson, and that is why I wanted to be a leader. Not to be in charge, but to facilitate growth and

community. I know that this is an
experience I'll never forget.

Taylor
B Cheyenne
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