

03/12/2017

I don't think I have ever been this excited about a service trip before. This is my first time in Georgia well in the South. Everything is so new and different, on the drive here I kept on looking outside my window noticing the differences and it was overwhelming and exhilarating. This trip is all about firsts for me. It was my first time staying at an inn, being in North Carolina, eating sweet plantains in America. I was a bit anxious about being a co pilot just because I was worried I might fall asleep or not be able to read the GPS properly. But everything worked out fine.

As an international student sometimes you think America is the same or you forget how huge and diverse it is. Driving to Americas I realized just how much I was going to learn ^{about a side of America I don't know} and how ^{different} this experience might be life altering and for a second I was terrified but for the most part I couldn't wait. Tomorrow we start our first day of service and I go to bed tonight with excitement. I am looking forward to this week in GA Americas and finally bonding with all my amazing team members!!!

Katia

3/13

I feel like today went by super fast, maybe because I was really focused on my work.

Today was the first day of servicing and we got to meet so many cool people, Jodie, That, ... I honestly can't remember the last time I was this excited to get into work. Me, Izzy and Annaliese were in charged of doing the floors, something I have never done before. Nevertheless, That was super helpful and I learnt a bunch of new stuff about carpenting. Never knew seeing the pieces fit perfectly together would be so satisfying.

In the evening, we played some Jenga and Cards Against Humanities which were awesome bonding times. It is just an amazing feeling seeing everybody getting closer and closer each day and I cannot wait to see this grow even more in the next couple of days. Me and the guys had some bro talk so we ended up staying up pretty late, but it's all good.

Overall it was a productive day with not so many lows. I'm excited to finish my floors on day 2.

Long

03/14/17

definitely felt as though we were more organized and probably because we're more comfortable with the space that we're in. I feel like I haven't gotten the opportunity to talk to Mark and Jodie, who are essentially our supervisors so it's hard in switching from the Fuller Center to Rainbow House to know that and/or Clay more as community members.

What we are learning so much through our work, yet at the same time, we are producing quality results and participating in an exchange that is more than charity. Beyond the exchange occurring through our work, I think that we are learning so much about the community, and vice-versa. The conversation we had as a group about thinking about the assumptions we have about the community and the assumptions they may have about us. I believe that the way to get past that mental obstacle is to challenge assumptions about how the people you are subconsciously judging, rather than trying to confirm certain judgements. I can't wait to see how much we learn about the community, how much they learn about us, and how much progress we make on the projects by the end of the year.

- Ginnah

10:47 pm March 15th,

Day by day, it is most definitely harder to wake up early every day. On top of multiple things such as late night talks with the friends I sleep with, or working and concentrating on the house at Rainbow Terrace, I'm definitely not used to waking up earlier than 9am. But once I'm up, volunteering and spending time with people I've grown to trust and enjoy give me endless energy for the whole day. Working at 121 Rainbow Terrace is definitely something I truly enjoy, and I'll definitely miss it when I work on the apartment at the Fuller Center. However, I'm excited and ready to do whatever task they need. Today, I spent a lot of time with Clay, Mr. Cox, who is genuinely someone I've grown on me. He's someone who makes fun of me and I enjoy his fun little games he plays on us while we're flooring. I feel that he's become more frustrating of us because he's giving us a lot more responsibility and asking us to finish flooring without his supervision. Flooring with Clay and Heidi was probably the ~~best~~ most enjoyable time volunteering we had all week and I really appreciate their support and trust in each other.

- Kumbira

March 16th

I'm not going to lie but waking up everyday at ~~7:00~~ 6:45am gets harder & harder. ~~even~~ Today is the first day I missed my morning shower, which is rare. I felt pretty good today at work; Me & Annaliese worked really well together, since she is a lefty & I'm a right hand person, so no one is on each other way. Highlight of my day is when the women from the coffee shop (next to the Fuller Center, gave me a discount for my mocha (b/c I'm a student). I don't know ~~when~~ I love when people give me free food, even though it's really small. Also, ~~we~~ in the evening after work, we got to spend time with the kids ^{@ tutoring}. They are adorable & smart. I thought I'm a socially awkward person & not good with kids but once I hang out with them, I love them & I love ~~teaching~~ helping them with math. At night, we had smore-night with Henry, Jess, Joel & Connor. We had a deep conversation about how segregation between races in Americas, even though it is a very diversify place with 48% Black, 30% white & ~~the Hispanic~~. Also we also talked about inclusion & exclusion of the community toward outsider (either different religion beliefs or just coming from another place w/o connection). It is very interesting to see the differences between the South & the North, and as an international student, I learned a lot about American culture in general. ~~and how it is~~ - An Luc

Friday

Sadly, today was our last day in Georgia. It felt strange not going straight to the Fuller center to get our tasks for the day as we had been doing. Overall, I'm pretty satisfied with the work we got done. I got to ~~see~~ spend a good amount of time at both sites and we made amazing progress at both, getting up a ton of dry wall at the Fuller center and turning the skeleton of a house into something much more on Rainbow Terrace. One of the things I was most worried about was that ~~there would~~ despite our good intentions we would end up not having ~~the~~ much to do and leave feeling we hadn't really helped out that much, but that fear was put to rest.

We spent the day sightseeing and hanging out, which was fun. Seeing the habitat village was interesting, though the "giant" peanut was quite anticlimactic. Peanut ice cream was surprisingly good and I picked up a ~~small~~ switch-comb (like a switch blade but instead of a blade a comb pops out) as a souvenir.

We ended the day having dinner together with Thew and Mark. Saying goodbye to the two of them was really hard. They both ~~are~~ are such

amazing people ~~was~~ who are extremely
inspiring. Both went through struggles in their
life (Thea's injury and needs very demanding
and seemingly unfair work) and yet neither
focused on that part of their life. They were
who ~~was~~ focused solely on helping people, and helping
us help people, and to me that is simply
amazing. I'm sad to be leaving so soon, but
am also proud of what we accomplished and
glad I had the opportunity to meet all the
outstanding people who I worked with and
hopefully will stay in touch with.

03/18/17

Before taking off this trip, I asked myself why I would rather spend my spring break working/volunteering while I can just take a breather, catch up with sleep, ~~after~~ I didn't know why I did that at first, ~~but~~ because I went on a trip last year & I know how the experience, that it will be tiring & time consuming, but then I realize it is the feeling at the end of the trip that keep me doing this. The ~~falling~~ fulfilling feeling of accomplishment, knowing that I made a difference somewhere to someone, that I didn't waste my time in something useless such as Netflix, makes me want to sign up for a service trip for next semester.

Personally ~~am~~ ~~not~~ thinking introvert. I got caught up in my own mind and found extremely difficult to share, express my feelings & beliefs. However, some of ~~the~~ you guys ~~have~~ ^{show} great patience for me, even though I knew sometimes I don't make any sense. I also don't have a great sense of humor too. ~~But~~ Sometimes I felt left out in those conversations, may be because language barriers, culture differences or my personality, but I appreciate the effort of everyone trying to include me in.

In term of work ~~in~~ at the Fuller Center, to be honest, I had never done such work before in my entire life & I would never expect to do one. I'm ~~grateful~~ grateful that I push through my limit, trying to do different tasks, task that

I'm terrified at such as hammer & abolish the ~~the~~ entire wall down &, using the nail guns, ect...

Even though I got so many cuts & ~~my~~ wounds on my hands, also b/c I'm clumsy, I felt good after all. Seeing how tight the community here in America reminds me of my hometown, where every knows about everyone, even about what they have for dinner. "

In addition, going to the global village of Habitat ^{for} Humanity reminds me, those broken, poor houses reminds me of my mom's hometown. My parents came from a very poor background where both had to ~~stop~~ drop out of high school to support their family. My mom moved to Ho Chi Minh city before I was born but we went back to her hometown every ~~year~~ year. I used to stay in those broken houses before for my staying. This experience help me to appreciate more about how much my parents sacrifice for me & my sister: to have a good education, living condition & happy childhood. ~~Now~~ I truly have ~~a~~ empathy to the people in need & I believe that they deserve our help, even little thing like having concern for them, asking about their lives, will mean the world to those people.

- AnLuc.

Journal Entry #1 - Nelson Saito

12 March 2017

Today, we awoke up to snow in Asheville. Feeling a bit chuffed, since we assumed the South was supposed to be warm, we slugged to breakfast (free! Shout out to Quality Inn) and, after returning Jonny's backpack, set out on the rest of our drive. Along the way, the snow faded and the number of billboards promoting Jesus' love emerged. In our car, we discussed many things, including regional displays of wealth (eg homes for the Midwest, clothes/shoes for the North East), classes & professors, music (Glee), etc. I drove for 3 hours & divided into two sections, bookending a delightful lunch at Ceily & Tito's (was that the name?). ~~Wk/Wk/pt/pt/del/del~~
~~to/pt/del/del, pt/del/del, pt/del/del, pt/del/del, all of/del/del/del/del/del~~
After Athens, and a quick pit stop, we finally arrived at a parking lot in Americus, where Jodi picked us up. He led us to a Mennonite congregation (that of Ryan) and Ryan & Jodi gave us a debrief. After, the ladies & grown-ups figured out dinner and the kids played, giving heartfelt renditions of "Don't Stop Believing," "Push it," etc. We pushed the tables together, slapped down some plates, and scarfed some pizza. We then had reflection (with a brief musical provide) & passed question ball. I'm really enjoying getting to see everyone's unique idiosyncrasies & strengths emerge. I hope that we can begin to see post-linear models of progress. I also hope that we continue to recognize each other, to learn about one another, and Americus.

JOURNAL ENTRY #2 - ANNALIESE TUCCI

13 MARCH 2011

TODAY WAS OUR FIRST OFFICIAL DAY ON THE JOB! IT WAS AN EXHAUSTING YET TOTALLY EXCITING AND OVERALL AMAZING DAY. I THINK WE HAVE ALL LEARNED SO MUCH, ALREADY. - THE GROUP SPLIT INTO TWO TODAY, 5 OF US AT THE FULLER CENTER AND 10 OF US AT THE "RAINBOW SITE." THOSE AT THE RAINBOW SITE WERE SUPERVISED BY THE MAN, THE MYTH, THE LEGEND, THAD. THAD IS ONE OF THE MOST INSPIRING MEN I HAVE EVER BEEN BLESSED TO MEET. HE IS PARALYZED FROM THE LEG DOWN YET PRANCED AROUND THE HOUSE WE WERE RECONSTRUCTING WITH SUCH ESSENCE AND DETERMINATION. HE IS A MAN ON A MISSION AND HIS DEDICATION AND RADIANCE REFLECTED ON ALL OF US TODAY. IZZY, LONG, AND I, ALONG WITH AMANDA (WHO LATER JOINED), PUT DOWN WOODEN FLOORS IN THE CHILDREN'S BEDROOM. THE REST OF THE GROUP DID SANDING AND PAINTING. IT WAS HARD WORK BUT COMMUNICATION AND TEAMWORK TRULY MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE. IT WAS SO BEAUTIFUL TO SEE EVERYONE SO EMPOWERED AND ENTHUSIASTIC TO FULFILL THEIR DUTIES. WE ALSO ATE LUNCH AT THE QUINTESSENTIAL SOUTHERN KITCHEN RESTAURANT. EVERYONE WAS SUPER PUMPED ABOUT LUNCH, AND WE ALSO MADE A REALLY AWESOME DINNER TOO (!) JENGA AND CARDS AGAINST HUMANITY WERE PLAYED, AND THE TEAM-BONDING WAS SO REAL. IT HAS BEEN SUCH AN EVENTFUL DAY TO SAY IN THE LEAST, AND I AM SO GLAD FOR THE SERIES OF FUN AND EXHAUSTING EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE. HOPEFULLY TOMORROW WILL BE SUNNY AND NOT RAINY BECAUSE TODAY WAS RAINY AND COLD. IT HAS JUST BEEN REALLY AWESOME TO SEE US BECOME MORE COMFORTABLE WITH EACH OTHER LITERALLY BY THE MINUTE. WE ARE SUCH A DIVERSE GROUP, RANGING FROM DIFFERENT AGES, CULTURES, COUNTRIES AND MAJORS YET WE ALL SHARE A COMMON INTEREST: THE ACT OF SERVING, AND THAT IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING I'VE DISCOVERED THUS FAR...

PI DAY!

3/14/17

Journal #3 - Heidi Kim

Day 2 of working hard! Today was super productive. We ~~gave~~ got done a lot more than I thought. We put up almost a whole hallway ~~length~~ length wall of drywall. It felt really good to know that we're actually building a home/living space for someone. Jodi visited for 5 minutes and Mark came by a couple of times. Mark and Jodi are such sweeties! Mark saw that we were struggling with some of the screws and the drills, so after lunch he came back with tools that would make the job easier. Time flew by so quickly because we were working so efficiently. I'm sure those at Rainbow site were working just as hard, too. I'm really excited to see how much we can accomplish in the next few days before we leave. It felt really great to know ~~o~~ that everyone is bonding and definitely starting to feel closer to each other. I'm so uber happy that I'm on this trip and with these amazing people. I'm so glad to share this extraordinary experience with them. We just have so much fun whenever we have freetime. Today, we jammed out and did YOGA! Thanks Nalani! And shoutout to Ben, Amanda, Cindy, and Annie for just being awesome, fun, proactive, and on top of things. Our group is so different, but we definitely all click with each other. Today was great.

Journal Entry #3 - Izzy Smith

3/15/17

Today was another great day at our work sites. Some of the group was able to switch places while some stayed at Rainbow and will switch tomorrow. For me, it was my third day at Rainbow and we continued to make great progress! It was definitely a different experience as new people had to learn the skills of flooring, painting etc. that some ~~of~~ of us have learned in the past few days. Rainbow also seems to be a place where people must seek out work and volunteer themselves for different projects. As Thad, the only floorman, can only supervise so many projects at a time, this was challenging, however, built great skills. A highlight of the day for me was eating dinner at the Methodist church. The hospitality of the church members was something I have never experienced. It was also amazing to get to talk to some locals to Americus about their town and experience here. Lastly, the conversations that we have been having about socioeconomic class, race, nonprofits, money, food, religion and culture has helped many to ~~compare~~ face these ~~the~~ issues and grow closer as a group. Keep up the good work, y'all!

Journal #5 (Thursday) - Greg Parker 3/14/17

Without echoing previous entries, today was another great day! Production at both work sites continued but ultimately, at the end of the day we hung up our drills and paint brushes. ~~Since~~ since I was working at Rainbow Terrace again today, I was able to witness and participate in that work site's progress. The bloating is less than half a day's work from being complete.

The kitchen was painted, as were various doors to the bedrooms and their closets. It was nice to see our entire Rainbow Terrace crew, including Chad and Clay, working together and smoothly switching between jobs without any fuss and eagerly willing to help each other.

It put a smile on my face when Chad predicted the family will move into their ~~new~~ new Rainbow Terrace house in two weeks.

→

However, the Fuller center apartment
also saw its crew nearly 60m
~~by~~ hanging the drywall!

Our day also included
a service opportunity to
tutor Hispanic kids at a bilingual
center. These kids, ranging from
kindergarten to the sixth grade,
had abundant energy. At the same
time, however, they also appeared
to enjoy learning math and reading
skills, as well as ~~interpreting~~ interpreting
various Bible stories.

The day concluded at
a bonfire hosted by several
volunteers ~~at~~ the Fuller Center
International office. We hung out,
roasted marshmallows, and drank
a lot of hot chocolate. At the
end of the night, we asked
the volunteers about life and non-

~~the~~ here in America. We discussed
topics ranging from the basis of
community in America to questions
about ~~the~~ ^{unintended} racism
in schools and churches. The volunteers'
thoughts on these topics and
issues fueled discussion between
certain members of our trip
into the ^{very} early morning.

Journal # 6(?) - Heidi Kim ☺

Georgia

It's Friday! It was our last "full" day in Americus. First, we went to Habitat for Humanity's Global Village. It was really interesting to see the kinds of houses they build in other countries. Afterwards, we met up with Mark & he took us to a glass blowing factory. It reminded me of the sugar work on the Foodnetwork channel (#hungry). Then, we went to Plains where we got peanut ice cream! And we went to see Jimmy Carter's peanut, which was kinda anticlimactic (but still somewhat cool).

I can't believe it's already nearing the end of our trip. We had a "last supper" with Thad & Mark. Mark made us a whole turkey and sweet potatoes! There was sooo much food! The vibes were just so great and awesome. I am so glad to have to met this amazing group. I'm sure they're tired of me saying how much I appreciate them, but I really do appreciate this group so much. I've been having a rough past couple of weeks, but this trip really and genuinely made me happy. Experiencing a new community and having the opportunity to meet so many great people has definitely been an inspiring experience. Leaving is definitely gonna be hard, but I do hope we all the chance to come back to Americus. Everything about this trip was uber awesome ☺

ANNALIESE TUCCI - JOURNAL ENTRY #7

MARCH 18TH 2017

TODAY HAS BEEN A SAD DAY BECAUSE WE LEFT AMERICA!! THIS TRIP OVERALL HAS BEEN SO LIFE-CHANGING AND MEMORABLE. I HAVE BEEN THINKING SO MUCH ABOUT WHAT MY PURPOSE IS IN LIFE AND WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MAKE THIS WORLD A BETTER PLACE. AND I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT ALL OF THE EVENTS IN MY LIFE THAT GOT ME TO THIS VERY MOMENT, HOW COULD THIS NOT BE FATE? TODAY WE DROVE OUT OF GEORGIA, PAST ATLANTA AND INTO TENNESSEE. WE ARE CURRENTLY STAYING IN KNOXVILLE AND HEADING BACK TO DIXONSON TOMORROW. A GIGANTIC PART OF ME GENUINELY WANTS TO STAY HERE (HOW IRONIC, I KNOW). I JUST WISH I COULD LIVE IN THIS MOMENT FOR A BIT LONGER. I HOPE WE ALL REMAIN FRIENDS BECAUSE I'VE DEVELOPED SUCH AMAZING BONDS WITH SO MANY PEOPLE HERE AND I WOULD NOT WANT TO DISSIPATE AS SOON AS WE GET BACK TO CAMPUS. WE ATE BREAKFAST FOR DINNER AT IHOP WHICH WAS SO FUN. WE ALL CAN'T STOP LAUGHING AT/WITH EACH OTHER. SERVICE TRIP TRULY BRINGS YOU CLOSER WITH OTHER PEOPLE BUT ALSO WITH YOURSELF: I FEEL MORE CONNECTED TO MYSELF THAN EVER BEFORE WHICH IS REALLY COOL. OVERALL, THIS TRIP CAN BE RATED A 10/10. THE PEOPLE WE MET ^{WE ATE} FOOD AND SERVICE WE DID WERE ABSOLUTELY AMAZING, I DON'T WANT THIS TO END! THIS GREAT TRIP WOULDN'T OF BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT BEN (OUR OAD), AMANDA, ANDY, AND ANNIE. THEY ARE ALL RAYS OF SUNSHINE AND I'M SO GLAD THEY FACILITATED THIS WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE.

TILL NEXT TIME, GEORGIA!