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During my very memorable summer, I conducted an internship at Open Arms Home for Children in Komga, South Africa. My work on the children's home focused on implementing business practices to make the orphanage run more effectively and efficiently. Throughout this endeavor, I faced several challenges and experienced many rewards. I also gained a deeper understanding about the region, Xhosa people, and the country of South Africa. I will always cherish my time spent in South Africa.

One of the significant challenges I faced was adjusting to life with the Xhosa people. Their belief systems are very different from that of the Western world. The Xhosa people hold above all other things a sense of community. They do not like individual recognition and giving a promotion was not something accepted by the culture. This makes interaction in the work place very different. I always had to be conscious of treating people exactly equally. An example of the situational difficulties of interacting with Xhosa people was when I was going to throw away a box of cereal that had bugs in it. A staff member asked me why I was throwing it away because it still had food in it. To ameliorate the situation, I gave the box of cereal to the women to take home instead of throwing it away. As a result, I now am more conscience of waste.

Throughout my time spent in South Africa I experienced countless rewards. One of the many rewards was being accepted by the Xhosa people. When I first arrived, some of the Xhosa people seemed stand offish. After a few weeks, several soccer games, and learning how to do the clicks in their language, I began to develop relationships with these people and I began to be accepted by them. The eight weeks allowed me to learn countless things about their culture and surprisingly make new discoveries about my own culture.

The hands-on nature of my work led to very rewarding experiences. Living everyday with forty of the amazing children I met was an experience I will always treasure. I was also able to witness exactly what the efforts of my work were going to. I was able to see the smiles of the children if I played a game with them. I could also see the improvements they made both socially and academically during the eight weeks. I would try to center my time spent doing business related work in the office around when the children were napping or at school in order to maximize my time spent with them.

It was very rewarding to see the effects of the internship program I instituted. When I first arrived, I noticed that children had few ideas of what they wanted to be when they grow up or knew what the different career fields in their town entailed. I decided to take action and began to meet and develop relationships with local business owners. I worked as the intermediary between the business owners and our older children. I talked with the children about the line of work, importance of work, hours expected to work in the various fields, etc. Then, we went to the business and local business owners would show our children an average day's work. After this was done, I would talk extensively with our children and compare the various career fields we explored. This was very rewarding for me because I was able to witness the transformation of their work habits over the weeks and help them discover their career interests.

During my time spent in South Africa, the culture and the country fascinated me. It was very interesting to observe how the tribal African people mix with people who trace their ancestry back to Europe. One minute I would be talking to a friend from the Xhosa tribe who lived in a house made of boards with a dirt floor and another friend would stop to say hello in their new Mercedes on their way to their five hundred plus acre homestead. Another thing I gained a deeper understanding about was how the effects of Apartheid are still very much

present. Adult white people made several comments to me about how the black were inferior people. However, I noticed this belief did not necessarily carry over to the children. One of the schools we send our children to has several white children. I had the privilege of assisting with the school's gym program and noticed that children did not appear to share the same beliefs as their parents, but treated blacks equally. I often found myself wondering how this compared to our country and the civil rights movement. One of the main differences that can be observed between the two countries is that unlike America, soon after the end of Apartheid, the blacks quickly took control of the majority of the public offices. I was very interested to listen to different perspectives of the perceptions of transitions, especially the different opinions as they pertain to Nelson Mandela.

Through my work I gained a deeper understanding about businesses, especially how it pertains to non-profits. A lot of my work dealt with analyzing expenses and developing more effective ways to take advantage of them. I realized that through very simple measures, businesses can save small amounts of money per week which adds to a significant amount of money on an annual basis. This is especially important considering Open Arm's main source of income is personal donations. Additionally, I gained a deeper understanding of management through my supervision of the staff. These skills will be very helpful as I pursue a career in international business.

I thoroughly enjoyed my fellowship. Throughout my experiences I encountered a few challenges along the way. However, this experience gave me many countless rewards that I will always remember and cherish. I gained a deeper understanding of the culture in South Africa as well as my own culture in America. This experience sparked an even greater interest to explore development and its challenges in my future studies.