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World Teach  
South Africa  
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This summer, I worked in South Africa with an organization called World Teach. World Teach is a non-governmental organization that sends volunteers to work as volunteer teachers in developing countries around the world. This trip was an incredible experience for me and very impactful. I am so thankful to the Kellogg Institute and World Teach for the wonderful adventure. It is very hard to describe the nine week experience in a quick summary, so please know that if you are interested in this program, I am more than happy to discuss the program in greater length with you and to answer any questions that you may have.

South Africa is the most beautiful place that I have ever visited. It is a country with gorgeous natural masterpieces everywhere I looked. The country is also home to some of the most loving and genuine people I have ever met. South Africa does have its struggles though, such as trying to rebuild and heal from the 50 years of apartheid. Apartheid means “separateness” in Afrikaans, which is one of the eleven official languages of South Africa. The Afrikaans language is descended from Dutch. Apartheid began in 1948 when the National Party gained control of the country. Under apartheid, there were specific places where people of a particular race could live. People were classified as white, black, or coloured. The country became segregated in communities and public spaces. The government forcibly removed people from their homes and these people were forced to live in black or coloured townships. During apartheid, the laws required black people to carry pass books with them at all times. This pass book was similar to an internal passport, containing identification information. The Pass Laws that required people to carry the pass books became some of the most hated symbols of

apartheid. Apartheid ended in 1994 with Nelson Mandela becoming president of South Africa. Although apartheid is officially over, the country today unfortunately remains segregated.

I worked at two different placements during my time in South Africa. While it was summer in America, it was winter in South Africa. During the school system's three week long winter break, I worked at the Pink House in Masiphumelele. I helped run a camp program in this community with two of the other volunteers to provide students with an activity during their days off. Masiphumelele is a black township in the Cape Peninsula. Masiphumelele was originally supposed to accommodate 500 people, but today it is the home to over 38,000 people. Most people in Masi live in shacks and many struggle with poverty. The Pink House is a non-governmental organization situated in the center of Masiphumelele. We were in charge of constructing the camp program for students in the community. We worked with about 40 kids, ages 10-16. These kids speak Xhosa, which is a very difficult language to pick up. So it was a good challenge to learn the best ways to communicate with each other. The work at the Pink House was very challenging, but also rewarding. We spent a lot of time constructing the program over the course of the 3 weeks. Each child had a journal which they took ownership of by the end of the program. We had them answer questions about a range of topics such as morals, values, dreams, and heroes. The students were very creative and many drew masterpieces, created poetry, and wrote stories in their journals. I loved getting to know each child individually as time went on. We made time to talk to each student one on one. The camp focused on helping these students increase their self-esteem and confidence, think about morals, practice their English, and have fun at the same time.

My second placement was at Kleinberg Primary School in Ocean View. Ocean View is a coloured township down the road from Masiphumelele. Ocean View faces many problems

from gangs, violence, and drugs. Many of the kids that I worked with here spoke Afrikaans as their first language. However, several of the students spoke a mixture of Xhosa, Afrikaans, and English. Kleinberg is a bilingual school where every student learns English and Afrikaans. I worked as an assistant teacher and I taught English to 7<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students. I also spent time individually tutoring students from Zimbabwe in English. The presence of the volunteers at the school helped create instructional time with smaller than normal groups. The average class size is 40 students at this school. I really enjoyed seeing how encouraging kids to read and providing them with some one-on-one learning time could transform a student labelled as a troublemaker into a flourishing student who realizes that he or she has unique talents.

During my time in South Africa, I lived with two different host families in Kommetjie. I had an absolutely wonderful experience with both of these loving families. They helped me feel at home. I lived with two of the other volunteers at both of these houses and we also became very close. A lot of the information that I learned about South Africa and their education system came from my conversations with my host families. They took such good care of us and taught us so much during our stay. I highly recommend living with a host family during your time abroad.

I learned so much about the education system in South Africa from my time at the Pink House and Kleinberg. I met so many people who want positive changes in the school system and are ready to meet the challenges of creating those reforms. There were many mentally and emotionally difficult days, but these days helped me really think about the issues I encountered. All of the hard work was well worth it. There were so many truly beautiful moments on this trip. I worked very hard to teach all of my students as much as I could, while caring for them and supporting them along the way. Although I was a teacher for the summer, I know that my

students and the people I met on this trip taught me much more than I taught them. I know that this adventure will continue impacting my life for years to come. I think I left a piece of my heart in South Africa, but I know that I will continue being inspired and fighting for all of my students through the work that I do in the future.