WE ALL HAVE A STORY TO TELL

Fall Break Service & Justice Trips 2013

“On the trip, I became a part of others’ stories, but their stories also became a part of mine. Perhaps the most important part of the Service & Justice Trip was realizing that there are real people with real stories outside of my community and outside of my life.” – Michael Baldovino ‘16
Left, Creighton students from the South Omaha trip walked in solidarity with the October Immigration ‘March for Families and Dignity’.

Pictured right, Kelly Sullivan holds a sign to peacefully participate in the vigil that took place in solidarity with the hunger strike at Guantanamo Bay.

Top, participants pose with the White Rose Catholic Worker Community.
Throughout the Service & Justice Trip we became more and more informed about different aspects of the West Virginian society that affected public health: black lung disease, prescription drug abuse, child poverty, strong family values, the new Affordable Healthcare Act, and even state pride. Every day, we immersed ourselves in West Virginian public health.

The day before we left West Virginia we had a discussion with West Virginia Healthy Kids and Families Coalition Executive Director Stephen Smith. He is a part of a team that creates beneficial change in the lives of children and families.

He taught us his job in six, simple steps: 1) have a real story, 2) organize a team, 3) set your goal, 4) find your target, 5) act with courage, and 6) evaluate. Being on an immersion trip and learning all that we have, I expected to discuss a situation on the elimination of child poverty in West Virginia, but we didn’t. He asked us to use our story, our own personal story.

Why would I use my life to outline change when for the past week I’ve been learning about other lives that I could help change?

In six steps, a complete stranger told a small group of students how to create change—on an entire state’s lifestyle or in an individual’s story. Then it hit me. Change is personal. The idea of change may start with a single individual with a personal story and may grow into a massive corporation. The Service & Justice Trip allowed me to encounter an experience that I would not have normally had. On the trip, I became a part of others’ stories, but their stories also became a part of mine.

Perhaps the most important part of the Service & Justice Trip was realizing that there are real people with real stories outside of my community and outside of my life. Through the Service and Justice Trip, I learned that there are no ordinary, everyday experiences, because each one of us lives a different life and follows a different path.

We can only grow by breaking out of our community bounds and meeting someone new. I was able to share an experience with the people of West Virginia. We both grew by understanding the differences in each of our lives, and overcoming the obstacle of distance in order to find a connection and grow in a personal relationship.
“My best experience was all of the opportunities when we were allowed to simply sit and talk with the clients even though we are so different. Many clients were so willing to share their stories and they only asked for us to remember their stories and use them to make a change.”

–Participant St. Martin’s Hospitality Center, Albuquerque, NM

“I felt alive when laboring in the fields, whether it was rain or shine, planting or harvesting. It was not only nice to be outside, but doing the work farmers have to do was a very humbling experience.”

–Participant Shadowbrook Farms, Lincoln, NE

“The best experience of this trip was bonding with my group. We did a lot of manual labor like painting, pulling staples out of the ground, raking leaves, etc. But we learned so much about each other in the process and it made the manual labor enjoyable. I learned so much about myself and the others when I wasn’t expecting to.”

–Participant Cap Corps, Milwaukee, WI

“Having dinner with the group and members of the community was so great. Being able to just be as one big community despite our backgrounds was amazing.”

–Participant Poder Center, Chicago, IL

“I enjoyed being with the students in the classroom because it encouraged me to be more patient and humble. It also put names and faces to the issues which were explained to us by Dwight Howe (culture teacher).”

–Participant St. Augustine Indian Mission, Winnebago, NE
‘Twas the Night Before Service Trips

‘Twas the night before Service Trips, and all down the mall
all the students were stirring from the excitement of it all.
The backpacks were all packed, so tight and so neat,
they were sure living simply would be quite the treat.

The students were nestled all snug in their beds,
while visions of the three general meetings danced in their heads.
You’ve met everyone in your group, they are all such a blast,
midterms are finally over, and the time has come at last!

When waking up, your alarm will go off with a CLATTER!
You’ll spring from your bed, your heart going pitter patter.
Away to the CCSJ you’ll hurry in a dash,
throw on your trip T-shirt, and take out the trash (better yet:
reuse, recycle, and compost).

From Omaha to Montgomery and Iowa to New Mexico
our van rides will be filled with games, don’t forget tic-tac-toe.
Laughter and joy will be in the front and in the rear,
but safety is key, don’t let your driver forget to STEER!

With hours of driving and maybe a stop on the way,
your destination is much closer than it was yesterday.
So prepare yourselves now to see the pillars in action,
the experiences you have, may even start a chain reaction!

NOW service, and justice, reflection, and simplicity,
ON sustainability, solidarity, and community—
From one side of the country and then to the next,
Things are starting to change, it’s okay to be a little perplexed.

What’s this? Something more than just charity?
Being for and with others, this is solidarity!
Give your hands to service and your hearts to love.
Gardening? Building? Tutoring? Hey, let’s do all the above.

So leave your cell phone and homework at home,
this week we’re living simply wherever we roam.
Fill your reusable water bottles and pack some shampoo to share
Sustainability can be easy anytime and anywhere.

At sundown every night we’ll gather together,
we’ve got a lot to talk about, so much more than just the weather.
Reflection gives us chance to process all we’ve seen and heard,
so let’s look back and figure out how to move forward.

With justice, we dig deeper than just curing the symptoms.
What’s the root of the issue? Let’s look at the systems.
What an opportunity we have if we do this as a team,
whether big or small, in community you are free to dream!

Over the next week, don’t forget to take it all in,
you’ve done all you can to prepare, now it’s time to begin.
So say it with us now, before away you zip:
“HAPPY SERVICE AND JUSTICE TO ALL, AND TO ALL A GOOD TRIP.”

At the send off service Becky Roselle and Jeannie Ngo delivered a humorous story to prepare the participants for what was to come.

189 students
23 locations across the United States

Want to see more pictures
and reflections from the
Service & Justice Trips?

Check out our website:
www.creighton.edu/ccsj

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www.facebook.com/creightonccsj

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Thank you to all who have nurtured our program over the last 31 years! We could not do this without your support financially and spiritually. Students have done their part this year contributing their student fees, speaking at Masses, offering manual labor for donations, and participating with local businesses to raise money. In Fall 2013, 84 students received $13,110 in need-based and leadership scholarships. We continue to seek ways to fundraise the money needed each year. We are grateful for your partnership, prayers, ideas, and contributions as you are able.

Who from the trip has inspired your life story?

“Guillermina’s story was very moving, her strength and faith are inspiring, and hearing her story made me desperately want to do something to affect change.”
-Participant Annunciation House, El Paso, TX

“John and Regina should be an inspiration for everyone on earth, I believe. They are the kindest, most hard working, strongest, and most rebellious and respectable people I have ever met.”
-Participant White Rose Catholic Worker House, Chicago, IL

“Sister Stephanie, she was pretty much an angel on earth.”
-Participant Siena/Francis House, Omaha, NE

“Miquita is a member of the church (St. Procopius) who despite her age is incredibly hardworking, yet gentle. She always greeted us with a smile and left us with hugs (and food!). Despite the language barrier, we felt her love.”
-Participant Poder Center, Chicago, IL

“Sister Gail asked us when we first met ‘What are the gifts God has given you with which you can change the world?’ It set up our service at the school accurately, and challenged us to see good within ourselves and to pursue it.”
-Participant Resurrection Catholic Missions, Montgomery, AL