

MISSION TRIP: A JOURNEY TO BECOME THE GOOD SAMARITAN

By Jared Cunningham

Ever since I got involved with Venture Youth Ministry when I was in middle school, I knew I wanted to be a part of the mission trip when I was old enough. The first chance there was, I sprung into action and joined the Mission Trip team.

I first went on the mission trip as a sophomore. I did it initially to collect my required service hours for my high school in one fell swoop. Then I found myself returning the next year and also found myself signing up to go once more this summer before I leave home and go on my way to college. During my first mission trip the emotions were not really contributing to the reason of going, the whole process never would have happened if I were not required to obtain service hours. I was not alone on the trip and was going with two of my close friends so in my brain I was doing this to be with my friends, and get my service required hours. Throughout the course of the week I felt like it was my calling to be helping at this Native American reservation, a force was compelling me to work my hardest and there was nothing I could do to control it. Halfway through the week I felt compelled to do more than just help fix houses and play with the children. During the eight hour road trip home my mind was flowing with an abundance of ecstasy including memories, compassion, and of joy that I had accomplished a goal that seemed to be out of reach at one time in my life.



One event that occurred during my 2nd mission trip impacted my life so much that it will forever leave an imprint. It was a sunny morning on the Standing Rock Reservation. Another person from our mission trip group came up to me and said a little girl had been asking for me and wanted to see me. This was my first time being with the children and a girl was asking for me by name. I was dumbfounded, completely jaw dropped. I had no idea how this girl knew my name or had even seen me. We played all week and I walked her home at the end of each day. I keep a picture of her in my kitchen on the refrigerator so that I can always remember her. Nothing in my life has happened that made such an impact on me as when this little girl called for me by name, there are some questions in life that will never be answered or explained and this is one of them. I accept that something unlike anything here on earth had that little girl asking for me that day in order to change my life forever.

Many students my age have jobs where they make money. Money will only go so far but the memories I made attending the mission trips will last forever. Going on mission filled my heart with joy. Every person I met during our weeks on the reservation touched my heart.

I will always have jobs that will pay me for the work. But mission is different. I feel like I'm playing the role of the Good Samaritan in a modern day aspect of giving to others. Taking a leap of faith to not just think of thy self for a little bit and use the gifts that God gave in order to serve other people. The mission trips were what I did to complete my service for my Christian service hours. But these requirements led me to have incredible experiences that will forever change the way I live my life. Every day I live my life as if I were still on the reservation helping the people of Rosebud and Standing Rock. I incorporate what I did and accomplished these past summers by living my life as a mission; by attempting to serve others each day. I have every intention attending every mission trip with my Church that I am able; every summer I am able to go, my name will be signed on the permission slip right away. I hope to serve in communities in need. Until I began going on these mission trips I never thought this would be a part of my future!