

Cairo Reflection

Cairo was my first mission trip. It all started in the back seat of a van squished between three of my best friends for a six hour bus ride. We arrived in Cairo tired, hungry, and crabby... yet we were all filled with excitement for the week to come. I myself didn't come with any expectations because I had never been on a mission trip before, and really did not know what to expect. I did, however, come with an open mind and an open heart, and I think that is the reason I had such a great experience.

My friends that had been on past mission trips had told me about Kids Club, and I think that this turned out to be my favorite part of the entire trip. I was with the five and six year olds, and let me just say, I do NOT remember having that much energy when I was their age! Being around those kids and seeing them open up to and "love up on you", as Deshon would say, was so rewarding and fulfilling and just so much fun! Their sticky little hands, their bright smiles, and their shrieks of "Give me a piggyback ride!", really made the trip for me. Having to say goodbye to them after the barbeque was really tough, but each and every one of them definitely left their mark on my soul, and I know I will remember them and keep them in my prayers for a long time to come.

A very humbling experience was working at Ms. Martha's house. Our job entailed chipping old paint away from the wood siding so that her house could be repainted. I would say that it was one of the most tedious tasks I have ever done, but my small group, and the others that were working along side me, made it fun and

memorable with lots of lemonade, sing-alongs, and newfound chipping techniques as we worked. Driving to Ms. Martha's house and seeing the conditions that the people of Cairo were living in on a daily basis really made you stop and think about how blessed and fortunate we are.

I walked away from this mission trip not only with t-shirts, bead necklaces from DonDon, and mosquito bites, but I also took back with me a new outlook on life, a humbled spirit, and a realization of how fortunate I am to live the life that I do. It showed me the possibility, opportunity, and responsibility that I have to help others that are less fortunate than I. Cairo was a life-changing trip to say the least, and I cannot wait for Mexico next year!

Val



Cairo 2008 was an experience never to be forgotten. It was an experience you can't capture off of the pictures and stories. It's one of those things where you can say so much, and no one else will feel what you felt. This being my first mission trip, I wasn't sure what to expect. When I was told I would be chipping paint off of a house for 2 days, I thought, "Are they nuts?!" But 2 days of that wasn't really what you would think. It was 2 days of my life where I felt like I was doing so much but when I look back, we barely finished one wall. But that one wall meant everything to Mrs. Martha, the owner of the house. She appreciated us being there and helping. When I went in to talk with her, I had tears in my eyes from hearing her stories, from being told the hard times she's been through. I was so touched by this sweet, caring woman. She appreciated everything we had done so much, and we knew it. When we were praying after the days work with Mrs. Martha, with linked hands in a big circle, you really felt her appreciation. On the next days to come, we had kids club. I am in love with kids to begin with, but these two days just made that stronger. My little friend Almetrias that I met was the cutest thing ever. He followed me around, and clung to my side. I fell in love with him instantly. Then on Thursday he had to leave early from kids club. He cried when he had to go. He didn't want to leave me. I never knew one little kid could do so much to a person, in such little time. It broke my heart when he walked away with his mother, crying. The scavendure hunt was super fun, I was in the senior car, but then changed to freshman car (college versus high school.) I wasn't feeling good, so I was left at the school, but picked up for the best part. Wickliffe, Kentucky. It instantly became my new favorite place, the huge cross, the amazing view. That was when it all hit me. In every part of that trip, God touched me. I felt more connected to God than I have ever felt before. He helped me find out a lot more about myself, the other amazing people in the youth group, learn about this poor town, and so much more. Going in there not knowing what to think turned into so much more. The first day went by so slow, and I thought it was going to be a long week. Before I knew it, it was time to leave. The last day made the entire trip even better. During the foot washing portion of club, when Mrs. Myroup was washing my feet, that was when I broke down. She had breast cancer, like my mom did, and that was one thing that triggered it. I don't remember exactly what she said, but that's when it happened. I started crying, and then everyone ended up crying. It was such a great trip and no one wanted to leave. It was that day, during the crying ceremony, it started to rain. The day we showed up, they told us the bad weather procedures. The Youthworks staff told us these things, and said it never rains or storms in Cairo, though. Maybe 3 times a year is what we were told. That last day, it stormed for hours. A bunch of the group ran out to feel the chilly drops falling from the sky. It was a feeling you can't explain, one that I could never forget. That's when I started thinking about how much this trip did to me. You never know how much you really do have, until you see how bad others do have it. I knew that this was Gods way of redirecting my attention back to Him. I knew from that day on, I would be changed **forever**.

 Kriston.

Cairo, IL. The poorest town in Illinois is at the southern tip of the state. If you heard that you would think about it for ten minutes. The only way you really know what it is like is to be there. That memory lasts a lifetime. My reflection is not a paper like most people, but something that was with me throughout my mission trip. My bandana is my reflection. What is on the bandana might not mean anything at the moment and that is what this paper is for. Every day in Cairo I received something that was important to me. On the first day I got my nametag. On the second and third days I worked at Kid's Club. There I met Aliah who was very nice. I put onto my bandana a foam egg and a foam N on top of the egg. On the fourth and fifth days I switched over to the work projects. As I scraped and painted atop a high ladder, as dripped paint onto my foam egg and N. I had learned service in both the Kid's Club and work project. I was able to use one of my special skills to balloon at Kid's Club, and I overcame my fear of heights at the work project. On the last day, I had no more time, and Ann Pluchar had made a bead cross the night before for me, so I tied it to the bandana. My bandana was finished and so was my mission. I have learned so much, and am looking forward to going to Mexico next year!

Easter Sunday

(for those of you that do not know, "Patriot Detail" is the ceremony all on duty military participate in when the body of fallen military personnel arrive at the airport. Each casket is treated with the greatest dignity, given full honors, draped in the American Flag and saluted by all.)

Ok, now onto the much cheerier part of this email!!!!!! I wanted to tell you about my church experience. On Saturday night I went to the Catholic Easter mass and on Sunday I went to the contemporary Easter service, the one where they sing lots of the same songs as Youthworks. After service I went home and wrote in the journal I'm keeping here. The only way I thoroughly know how to explain my experience to you is to copy directly from my journal for you to read. So here is my journal entry for Easter Sunday night:

"Happy Easter Sunday! I just got back from contemporary service and it moved me. ...First, it occurred to me how Jesus is such a wonderful example of military service and being willing to die for ones country. God told him that he put him on earth to die so that others could live. Jesus was scared, but knew that he must do what was right in order to save others. He was apprehensive, misunderstood and lonely, but he was doing what he believed in, what he was put on this earth to complete. How powerful is that?...I had two examples today of Christ working in mysterious ways that I cant quite sort out. Early this morning Jeremy's (a man here with me in the Fire department) grandmother passed away. And then last night, at 0345 Easter morning, we had a patriot detail where 7 caskets were loaded for the trip home to their families. Both of these are of course very sad and deserve our respect, but I cant help but feel filled with peace knowing that these people passed away on Easter Sunday. That gives me faith that yes indeed after death we will be raised up, just as Jesus did this very morning. God, please give peace to those families and let them see the gift that I see in their time of suffering. I feel that mass tonight truly filled me with the Holy Spirit. I also feel though that it has lifted a weight of loneliness for my family that I have been caring. Yesterday on the phone I was frustrated and I see now that my frustration was manifested in my loneliness for them and sorrow that I would not be home to celebrate Easter with them. As we were singing "amazing love, how can it be? That you my king would die for me? Amazing love, I know it's true. And it's my job to honor you, in all I do, I honor you." I was just suddenly overwhelmed by how much I miss my family and how much I have been suppressing those feelings. Maybe I do it to be strong and make my time here easier. But singing those words as I used to with my sisters and mama on so many trips in so many memories, my heart was filled with Mama's voice and it all came crashing in on me. My throat tightened and I just felt completely overwhelmed. ... Thank you God for giving me the strength and time to be with you, center myself, and realize all of the gifts that you have given me on this Easter Sunday. Thank you for all of the childhood Easters and the cherished memories from those times, but also the mature realization of what Easter really means."

So that was my very good experience from my little chapel in Baghdad. I thought that you and daddy would especially like hearing my thoughts. It's amazing how sharing our faith makes me feel closer to you over all this distance!!

through.

cairo 2008 reflection

dear God,

this mission trip You taught me how to pray,
through peers, chaperones and youth works staff I saw each day.

Your love shone through every smile,
and I felt Your presence closer than I had in quite a while.

You showed me the world that You created,
and seeing through Your eyes I felt elated.

I met Your son Jesus again
through the personalities of my friends.

and my soul filled with the Spirit,

I just had to let everyone hear it!

I spoke Your words as you intended
through the love my scratchy voice was mended.

at twelve a.m. You inspired me
to be the Christian I'm meant to be.

beyond this night I'll keep the feeling
that sends my heart and mind reeling

and helps me make up silly rhymes
to commemorate my favorite times.

through all good things You have said,

now all this I know in my head:

that anything terrible that may come my way

I'll conquer it by keeping firm in my faith

and anything bad I may bear,

with You on my side there's really no reason to be scared.

up to You my life I'll give,
your servant and loving child,

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Joshua MagalSKI

The mission trip to Cairo was an enlightening and fun trip. The sites were well planned. I had a lot of fun getting to know everyone. The Kids club and scraping the houses were fun and it was a great feeling to be with all of those people. The events were amazing and it was nice to go to a different church and see what they do at church and see how different it is from our church. This trip was a completely amazing experience that changed the way I think about bad neighborhoods. The way that those people have to live are probably not that good. Are helping them hope changed their lives. Even if they just had a little change in their life we did really good. The small groups were a great idea all of us got to know each other even more. The prayer walk was my favorite part. The walk let us see more of Cairo and we had got the chance to pray for a lot of the people. This is what I had thought of the mission trip.

It was a great pleasure to be part of a group of incredible people who gave entirely of themselves to help others — no complaining, always positive and upbeat; always willing to do whatever needed to be done.

They showed their love and affection for each other by working together in that hot Cairo sun and having fun while making a difference in other's lives.

I saw compassion and caring, respect and hopefulness; energy and encouragement and a deep love for one another.

Thank you for this wonderful opportunity and thank you for these memories that will last a lifetime.

Sincerely
Deb Myroup

CAIRO 2008

Mike D'Ambrosio

On the way down to Cairo, I'll be honest I really did not want to go but, one day in I was so happy. The trip was so exiting and fun filled. Despite the long hours in the sun seeing the looks on Skip's and Grace's faces made it all worth it. Before the trip I thought we were going to just work for the whole week but every night club was extremley fun, and we even went bowling which was my favorite part of the trip. Going into the trip I only knew a few people but driving home I knew everybody in my van and many more. At the end of everyday we went into ~~the~~ small groups and expressed our feeling of how the day went, and even though I was a little shy it was like I ~~was~~ wanted to express ~~my~~ my self even though it was out of my comfort zone. Our group leaders on the trip were nothing short of amazing and Teshawn was my favorite he was just a well rounded person, and it was easy to be his friend, and he is very good at basketball. Whitney was ~~so~~ cool to she was fun at

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club, and was also very outgoing.
During the trip I was wearing
an Impala shirt, and Whitney drives
an Impala, so she loved the shirt.
So at the end of the trip I
gave the shirt to her as a gift.
In the end the trip was nothing
short of amazing. I could not
describe how much fun I really
had, and also ~~in~~ The dairy hut
~~was~~ ~~not~~ ~~there~~ some of the
best ice cream I have ever had.

Mission Trip '08

By: Angelique Agostinelli

Mission Trip 2008 to Cairo, IL was my first mission trip, and I loved every minute of it! I met so many new people and became much closer and more accepted with the ones I already knew. I even made friends with other kids from different states with their churches, wanting to help just as much as we did. I still talk online to a few of them today! Helping the little kids at Kids Club was by far my favorite part of the entire trip! Seeing their faces when they arrived light up like Christmas morning was unforgettable and made me feel like what I was doing with my time was a fantastic thing. Sitting at registration talking with kids too old for kids club hanging out on the streets was eye opening too! One boy, Mikeha, told us he doesn't get involved with the gangs or drugs and he wishes he could still go to Kids Club! I think

that's because kids club showed him
another way of life than what he
would of seen v on the streets all

growing up
the time. And seeing that people in the
town were wanting change and helping
to try and change it was shocking too!
I expected it to be a lot worse
than it was and I'm happy to of
helped. The experience benefitted me as
much as it did them. Can't wait for the
next four years!

- Angel
Agostini

7/9/08

This mission trip was my first and it was really really fun!! I enjoyed helping out. Before the first day even started I said that it felt good knowing that I'm here to help. This trip I know I didn't just go on just cuz I wanted to, but instead it was a calling ~~from~~ from God. I enjoyed helping out with kids club and painting the house. Meeting new people from our church and all the others was a really cool ~~experi~~ experience, too. Also growing closer to everyone made me realize that our St. Julies TMT Youth Group is not just a bunch of teens hanging out, but one big family that you can count on and ~~rely~~ rely on to be there when you're down and to have your back when you're not. This trip also brought me MUCH closer to God. The prayer walk was one of my favorite things. I shared a lot of my beliefs on it and I'll share some now. One of my beliefs is that we were all put here on this earth for a purpose and when God knows that we know that we fulfilled that purpose then He will call us home to our true home in Heaven. Another thing that I thought about was we know ^{hear} of our make-believe powers like ~~lasers~~ ^{lasers} shooting from our eyes or walking through

walks, but God can do any thing. He has power that we can't even imagine about and yet He allows us to do His job for Him!! I don't know about you, but I feel honored to be given this trust. Over all I love this mission trip with a ~~passion~~ passion. I'm ~~definitely~~ definitely going to ~~the~~ next year's mission trip and remember THE LORD LOVES YOU!

Adam Marshall

This mission trip to Cairo, IL has changed my life more than I could have imagined. I can still remember all the little paint spots I filled in on Miss Grace's stucco to get rid of the green and welcome the beige (although, Miss Grace did not like this color). I can remember the horrible scraping we had to do on the top half of the house and the terrible painting that needed to be done ~~on~~ ~~the~~ ~~room~~ under the porch. I can remember most of the 9 and 10-year-olds' names and faces. The way they reacted to our new game was absolutely priceless. They were excited and confused and anxious all at once. The one thing I may remember the most is the way they craved water. The water was a consolation prize for whoever could be the best mannered. Even though they were regarded as "the bad kids" of Kids Club, they really got into the games, crafts, and bible study.

In Minnesota, I felt like I got more out of Kids Club than worksite. I think in Cairo it was the exact opposite. Yes, I got ~~more~~ so much out of Kids Club, but the fact of the matter is that work project was ~~so~~ ~~much~~ more rewarding. When we arrived at her house the first day, we soon found out a lot about Miss Grace and her roommate Skip. We learned that Miss Grace was from South Chicago and had a breathing machine and couldn't walk very well. We also found out ~~from~~ her roommate Skip how ridiculously high the utility bills were and how much Skip moved around. I don't remember ~~how~~ the exact number, but I think it was somewhere around 15 different places he lived. The graciousness that radiated off of Grace and Skip was incredible. They offered us showers (with the really high bills), clothes (ours were paint covered)

popsticks, water and so much more. They had a candy shop in the front part of their house and offered us free items, but we politely declined. Our group felt we couldn't possibly accept the treats free of charge because that could have been the only income keeping them living where they were. Skip and Miss Grace were grateful and thankful for everything we did with their house (keep in mind, Grace didn't like the color). Despite that minor setback, the rest of the trip was fulfilling and all-around amazing. This past mission trip to Cairo, IL has changed my life more than I could have ever imagined.

Kate Myrroun

Cairo 2008

In my life, it has never been more easy to see God than the day we arrived in Cairo, Illinois. Truly, I think God shown through each and every person I met there. and in each one of my now-best-friends that we traveled there with.

The people in Cairo were absolutely amazing. From our leaders, to the the kids at kid's Club, each person was a blessing. That was my favorite part about the mission trip, the people. Each person had a story and Cairo gave me a chance to ~~write~~ hear those stories.

First, there was Don-Don. The trouble-making ^{5-year-old} sweetheart I met at kid's Club. No one else seemed to be able to handle him. He ran around like crazy and didn't like to listen.



But for whatever reason, he liked me. He liked to talk to me. We played games all day together and he would get so excited to see me. I cried when I left him. Not because I wouldn't see him again, but because I would probably never find out what a great boy he would ^{turn out to} be one day. He wanted to be a basketball player.

Another amazing person I met was Ron. A pastor from a church in Colorado that ^{had} joined us for ~~a~~ the week. I remember on the last day he told us that he had memorized all of our faces and if we were ~~to~~ ever be in Colorado that he had a home for us. I've never felt so connected through God and especially through people I had only known a week.

Then there was Miss. Mantha. I spent 2 days scraping paint of her house. It was long, boring work in the hot sun, but trust me, Miss Mantha made it worth it.

She didn't have much, but she would never fail to have lemonade for us, and each day she would say a prayer with us and insist on a hug from each of us. It's people like Miss. Martha who you never forget.

I've never felt ~~that~~ ^{as} close to God as I did after the mission trip, and I will never forget the people in Cairo. God must love Cairo, Illinois.

