

because of the TNT people. The people from Youthworks were all really awesome. That birthday was probably my best one so far. It was just an overall great week.

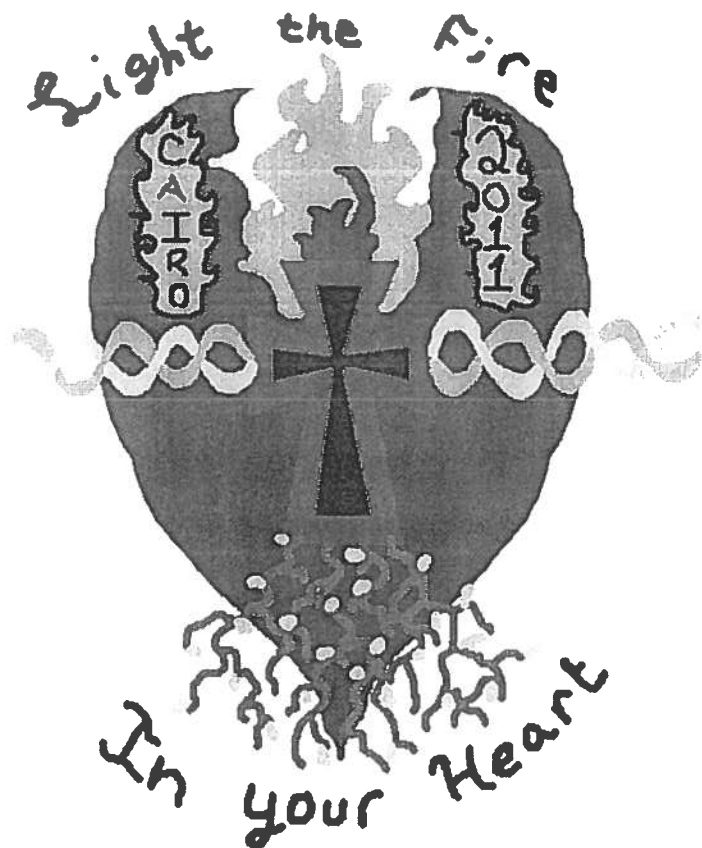
Possibly the best week of my life... That was the thought drifting through my head during the week of Mission Trip 2011 to Cairo, Illinois.

3 years ago I traveled to Cairo for the first time. I had an amazing experience and liked it so much I vowed never to miss a TNT trip from then on. I never thought Cairo '08 would be topped, but I was dumbfounded when after only 2 days on Cairo '11 I had found a new favorite. Everything seemed as close to perfect as possible. Sure there were some negatives but nothing is perfect, so I try not to linger on it. Instead I turn towards the amazing group I went to Cairo with and the bonds that I made with many of the people in our church and in the other church. Cairo itself was a new experience too. It definitely had changed for the better from 3 years ago, although the dairy hut had closed down. All the locals could not be nicer. Everyone seemed genuinely excited to see us there! They even hosted a special mass for us, a pretty memorable experience for me. Not to mention the leaders. The YouthWorks leaders far far far surpassed any other leaders to date. I was able to relate to many of them and realized they were only about 2 or 3 years older than me.

I had a personal goal this trip. It was to make everyone feel fully accepted into our church group. But I also wanted to take one new person even farther and make him/her feel as if they were with the group for years. I hope I achieved that, you know who you are, and if you don't, well then I failed. I also tried to get my motto for this trip on the T-Shirts, but unfortunately I was unable to this year. My motto was "Light the fire in your heart". I basically tried to encourage everyone to just be themselves and to be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. I believe most if not everyone lit the fire in their hearts this trip. Last but not least, I'd like to take this line and thank everyone for making this trip the best week ever, because it was the people that made this trip what it was by far. I do not think this trip can be topped, but who knows? I said that 3 years ago and look what happened. Mission 2012 here we come...

Oh and PARTY ROCK!!!!

Nick Metzler



There are no words sufficient enough to describe the 2011 mission trip to Cairo, Illinois.

--Shannon Kline

Just kidding. While looking at only the surface of this reflection it appears that there is so little to it. There are only 15 words— 17 if you choose to count my name as well. That's how it was with Cairo. There seemed to be so little to see, everything was abandoned, but the people looked like they were doing alright. But, really there was so much more than everyone's appearance.

When I was in kids' club, there was this little girl named Princess. Everything looked fine for her. She had her hair all braided (she had a weave. She taught me all about them), and a cute little skirt on. She loved being photographed and it kept her occupied, so myself, and a boy named Nigel took about 20 photos of her. When Princess's mother came to pick her up and saw us photographing her, she asked if I could send some of the photos in the mail. This family that looked totally fine from the outside had nothing. They were more than just what they looked like. Princess's mother had no photos of her daughter at all. She said that cameras were too expensive and even if she could afford one there was no way she could get the photos developed for some time after that.

At the retirement home, I met a lady named Grace. She looked well enough, save for a brace on her ankle and the normal wrinkles that came with old age. When I asked her (politely, don't worry), why it is that she was there, she said that no one in her family could afford to keep her at their house. She had fallen and broken herself. Since she lived alone, she was too scared that she would fall and be stuck motionless and without help for too long, so she asked her family if she could live with them. No one could afford the space or the cost of her, so she "came where all old people come to be abandoned". She owned a beauty parlor before she came to live at the retirement home, and missed it more than anything. It was right in her house, and would be staying there untouched 'til someone threw it out with the rest of her stuff. It didn't make enough to be kept open unless she was running it— she couldn't afford to pay someone else to cut hair.

On the final evening of our mission trip, we went to a barbecue, as customary of all youth works trips. Last year at the Tallulah, Louisiana trip, there was plenty of food to go around. People would take one or two hotdogs and hamburgers, and there weren't all that many people who showed up. For this barbecue, there were sooo many people who came and wanted food. The adults would take their kids in line and make them all plates of more food than they could possibly eat. Even with the limit of one hot dog or hamburger to begin with so that everyone would get food, there were moms putting 6 or so hotdogs on their plates, claiming that their kids didn't get a plate so they were fixing one for the whole family. Before any of us got any food, there was no more food to get. We ran out of hot dogs and hamburgers. Some of us managed to get veggie burgers, hot off the grill before people swarmed for seconds, but most of us left without eating much. (Again, don't worry, we ate when we got back to where we were staying). One of the older girls from the community explained to me why it is everyone took so much

food. She told me “Well, it’s not that they are that hungry or are doing it to be mean to everyone else. They just operate on the food chain method, the weakest get eaten. So to beat everyone else out, they need the most. That, and they can’t always get food like this”.

I realized from this trip that there is so much more than what meets the eye. I learned that everyone needs something. Maybe it’s just a photograph, maybe it’s a family to love them, maybe its 6 or 7 hotdogs and hamburgers. Just because people look okay, that isn’t always the case. People need people, and God is the reason that we were able to be the people that people needed.

Shannon Kinne

Mission Trip to Cairo, IL

The mission trip to Cairo, IL was the first mission trip I'd ever been on. There were many things I found rewarding about the trip. I loved working with the local community. I also enjoyed getting to know different people who were part our mission trip.

First of all, as I began working with the community, it was nice to see that we were making a difference in the area by playing with the local kids, going to a nursing home to visit the elderly, fixing houses, or even helping with yard work. I am glad I had the chance to help families who need it. It makes me happy that I was able to be a part of a group that goes to a community to help them grow. I am thankful I was able to spend a part of my summer doing this.

Secondly, it was a lot of fun to get to know the other people involved with the mission trip. A good number of the group were my cousins, so I knew a lot of the faces there but some of my cousins on this mission trip lived as far as Maryland. It was nice to get to know them because I haven't seen them very much. It was also nice to get to know the other new people on the trip as well. The drive down to Cairo was a perfect time to meet other members of the mission group in my van, three of which were my cousins, and learn where they were from and why they came on the mission trip.

Overall, the mission trip was a blast and I had a lot of fun. Whether it would be to Cairo again or to a different town or place, I would love to take part in another mission trip to help people.

Sarah Kruse

This experience was very enlightening for me. It brought me much closer to God and his work. I really enjoyed meeting new people and making new friendships that will last a life time. My favorite part of mission trip was working with the kids in kids club. I was kind of nervous that I only knew one person that was going on the trip but everyone was so welcoming and nice. Going on this trip really strengthened my relationship with God. I am really excited to get more involved with TNT and God. I cant wait for mission trip next year!!!!!!!

EMILY EVANS CAIRO, ILLINOIS; 1st MISSION TRIP REFLECTION!

My first mission trip was one of the best experiences I have ever had. Everyone I know always has some kind of amazing memory to write about in their narrative essays, me on the other hand have never had anything that great to write about until now. My first mission trip is one of the memories I can definitely write about and I know I will always look back on this week and smile.

When we arrived at the church in the morning I was a little sleepy and a little upset that my mom wouldn't let my sister and I in the 'Party Van' but I quickly got over that when I heard everyone talking about how great the mission trips were and I knew this one would be just as great if not better. The ride there seemed to go by quickly and before I knew it we were unpacking our bags and setting up our beds. I was a little unfamiliar with my surroundings until we met the YouthWorks leaders who welcomed us to our home for that week. They were all such honest and kind hearted people and their love for god was contagious.

I really enjoyed small group time because I always felt like I was able to say what I needed to say. I also really enjoyed work groups and worksites. When we first arrived in Cairo I wasn't so sure how I was going to be able to work outside in the heat for six hours everyday but when I actually went out and started to work, I loved it. I concentrated less on the temperature outside and more on getting to know everyone in the group better and getting to know the young girls who lived in the house who helped us paint better. It was amazing to see how happy and sweet these girls were. Seeing this reminded me that materialistic things are not what makes a person happy, these girls are just barely getting by and they were as happy as ever! Kids Club was another place where we made a huge impact. Who knew giving a little boy a piggy-back-ride, making a little girl a bracelet, or letting her play with your hair would make their day.

We participated in a whole bunch of fun activities throughout the week. Our first activity was the scavenger hunt which ended at the giant cross. The cross was one of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen! The next day we went to a church where we sang and danced for about 25 minutes! I never thought I would hear a song that played in church on the radio! The preacher was phenomenal; he connected with each and everyone of us in the crowd and his words about God really got to me. Bowling was another great time and so was the picnic at the park. The last activity was the cookout. It was nice to see most of the town come together and I loved seeing everyone that I met throughout the week(whether from kids club or

worksites) for the last time. We also played in the fire hydrant that day and I remember telling my mom how I couldn't stop smiling that entire time. Everyone has a favorite part and although I did enjoy all of these activities, my favorite was Thursday night. Kristyn and Alyssa told me that the last night of club was always emotional but this was something we all did not expect. I truly felt God in the room. He revealed himself to us all that night. All of the emotions connected everyone in the room in a way that cannot be described. I know this was Gods doing.

This whole trip I knew God was not only with me but with us all. I connected with him and now I look at things a whole lot differently. One thing I got out of this trip was that with God anything is possible. He brought us to Cairo , Illinois and with his help we made a huge impact in the community. He helped us spread our love to those who needed it most. I am now closer with God than ever before. Like how we spread our love to those in Cairo, God spreads his love to us everyday.

When we went to the nursing home I loved listening to all of the stories. I know now that when someone asks me what was a great memory of yours I will be sure to tell them about my first mission trip to Cairo, Illinois. When I write my next narrative essay I will be sure to write about the small groups, the smiles, the laughter, the crying sessions, the clubs, the new friendships, the long games of Egyptian Rat Screw, the projects, the kids, the worksites, the leaders, the "yea gods" and "BBQ Bobs" (BBQ Kendall?). and most importantly my time spent with God and all of you. I hope to be as lucky as the in-coming seniors and have the opportunity to come back to Cairo during my junior year. I cannot explain how much I am looking forward to making more amazing memories during my next four mission trips ! Wherever we go I know we can make a difference and also make memories! Thank you for the opportunities and God bless!

☺

Emilia Evans Pa 2

Shay McCutcheon O'Toole

Mission Trip 2011 Reflection

I'm not sure how to write one of these, so please just bear with me. Even after having imagined what it would be like to go on mission, or any TNT trip for that matter, for the past four years, mission trip far surpassed any expectation I had. All of high school I hoped to be able to join TNT on mission, breakaway or plano. I never doubted that I would have a lot of fun and make good memories, but I never imagined that I would truly have a life changing experience. I've been on many trips and been a lot of places throughout the United States, but the small town of Cairo touched me like no other place ever could. Being in Cairo simply taught me the importance of being thankful for what I have, loving others, and teaching them to love others too.

I've heard and read plenty about small towns, poverty, family troubles, prostitution, drug issues, etc., but being in a place where these issues are real and are often come across really opened my eyes. Living in the nice town and family I live with it's easy to forget the bigger picture and let little things bring you down. Ever since I came home from mission I've had an extremely hard time being patient and listening to others' small issues because all I can think of is the people of Cairo and how much worse they have it. While talking about how much I wished I could help the town more with someone they mentioned to me that I should remember that there are far worse places in the world. Being in Cairo this never, ever occurred to me. It's hard to believe this to be true and makes me wonder why the people living in Cairo aren't in my shoes living in Orland Park.

My favorite part about mission trip was spending time with all the kids in kids club. I thought it was amazing that not only we could bring so much joy to the children, but also to ourselves and each other. While I have no idea what any of their family lives are like we were told that many were abused or neglected at home, but I was shocked at how rare it showed in the kids. I feel like the presence of God was really with those kids because they really showed us a lot of love and joy just by being in our lives for a few hours.

I think that mission trip helped me see that God really does have a bigger plan for us. I know that God wouldn't put the people in Cairo through so many hardships if there wasn't joy waiting for them somewhere else.

Being in Cairo also really taught me that there are some things that you just can't put into words since I'm having an extremely hard time doing it right now. I'm so thankful for all the wonderful people that I experienced the trip with because I know they will always understand what I went through and experienced while being in Cairo, Illinois.

I recently babysat a pair of young children, who both came from a loving family. However, behavioral wise, they were, well... not. Every year I am amazed at the children who attend kids camp. The fact that they are so willing, and well behaved, after enduring whatever their home life is everyday is really touching. The fact that just loving these kids can turn their lives around is truly inspiring.

In past years I have always enjoyed the work sites more than kids club, I always felt like that I could really see the impact I made in the community by making a house look new. It was so hard to see a difference in a child after two days of kids club, which really adds up to somewhere around five hours of face time. But, this year it suddenly dawned on me that in just five hours I made an impact in someone's life. However, the more that I thought about this the more it struck me that these kids were making a bigger impact on me. As cliché as it sounds, it really is true.

As much as I loved working in the Cairo community, this trip really helped me to finally feel apart of your youth group. Fair portions of you are starting to look familiar to me, either because were related, or because by my third mission trip we have now been on a few together. Because our church in Michigan lacks a youth group I have never really known what it is like to be a part of one. Now, thanks to all of you, and Cairo, I finally know what it is like to help create a bettered world from God's wishes.

I never really knew what the main “mission” was for a mission trip. I mean I know people say that we are supposed to show Jesus to the community but I did not completely understand that or respond to that, last year anyways. This year, in Cairo, Mission Trip was definitely different from last year and I have to say that I enjoyed it so much more.

I never really talked to Jesus before this. Well I prayed and talked to God but Jesus was more distant in my life. Which is slightly weird because Jesus is more like us, he is man as well as God and God is just God, a mystery. Luckily, for me anyways, somewhere throughout the week Jesus found me. I do not really know what happened but Jesus is in my heart so much closer to me than He was before. That is when I learned what mission trips are all about. They are about spreading Jesus through actions and helping communities who are less fortunate. Letting the communities see God even if they are not necessarily open to Him but get help anyways, changing not only their lives but ours too.

So, I know that this is a pretty short reflection and I guess I could go on for pages about everything we did and what I liked about it but that seems boring (to read and to write). This is the gist of what I got out of this mission trip. Its short but it reflects what I got out of it. (Isn't that what a reflection should be anyways?)

Devin O'Donnell

People constantly say that mission trips are about helping the community you visit, getting to know the people you work with and becoming closer to Jesus. They have the order wrong. Mission trips are about becoming closer to Jesus and learning about the capacity of His love. This is my second mission trip and I think that this one has had a more profound impact on my life.

The focal point of the mission trips shifted between Tallulah and Cairo. The first mission trip was not as focused on what I would have liked it to be, but this year it was. This year was centered around Jesus: who Jesus is, what He did, and how we can be more like Him. Jesus is what I wanted to know more about. I usually pray to God: I was never told otherwise and thought nothing of it. But as my faith has progressed I realized that Jesus is the gateway into heaven. He gave His life for us and so we should give ours to Him.

It was a little unnatural and felt uncomfortable to pray to Jesus but after the mission trip it really started to make more sense. I found that praying to Jesus was very helpful it calmed me and made me feel like I had more of a friend in Jesus than I had found in God. God is wonderful, He really is but Jesus is more relatable. We are also taught that God is "above" us that, He is there for us but a little bit distant, Jesus is there every single moment of every single day and we are supposed to use Him for guidance in our everyday lives.

I really enjoyed the mission trip this year and want to thank you again for letting me come. Seeing everyone again was great and building a better relationship with Jesus is making a great impact in my life. God Bless. Brienne O'Donnell

Anthony Peña

Cairo, IL. A town at the seat of Alexander County, it was once thought to be the next Chicago. Now on a dramatic decline in population since reaching an overall peak of 15,203 in 1920 and an all time low of 2,831 in the 2010 census.

It is not the first time I have been to Cairo, IL. I was first there back in the summer of 2008; though this time around it was different for me. Coming back I had noticed that not only I have grown as a person, but that the town was starting to grow a bit as well. I will never forget how this trip to Cairo had changed the way I viewed life. This time going into Cairo I was no longer fixed on filling up my empty summer, but to really make a difference. The first two days I was at kids club. Kids Club has always been my favorite part of the week. I just enjoyed playing games with the local children, and I know that they really enjoyed the activities we had plan for them. The thing that I like the most about it was that we were possibly able to distract these kids from the hardships that they were experiencing at home.

The final two days I was at a housing sight. The house I was working on was absolutely beautiful. Everyone on my work team did a fantastic job on the front lawn. Despite the fact that someone, I won't name names (Meghan Kline), had gotten yellow spray paint on me. But I digress.

The most defining moment for me was on Thursday. It was the moment when both groups came together as almost a family. I had lost my grandfather earlier that week, while I was on the trip. I was sad that I was unable to make it to the funeral, but everyone helped my get through it. It is not that often that I feel that much support from people. It was one of the best

weeks I have ever had, and I owe all to St. Julie for giving me the opportunity to go on this trip again.

When I originally came to this place after my freshman year; I came in with a closed heart and a closed mind. I did it for the service ours not thinking about the good that came from my actions, and no did I care at the time. Now I see the good that I did, that I'm doing, and that I'm going to do.

Jack Harmening

Pack only what you won't bring back.
Pack the clothes you will ruin.
Pack your presumptions and ideas.
Pack your regrets and fears.
You won't bring them back.

Presumptions and ideas,
They won't help you now.
They tell you what you think will be
Yet betray you, prove false.
You won't bring them back.

Regrets and fears,
They drag you down, alone.
But here, you are surrounded.
So you won't bring them back.

You will look for things to fill your pack.
You've left so much behind,
Your pack is empty, ready to be filled.
With only what you will bring back.

Bring back new presumptions, new ideas.
Bring them back and share them.
Act upon them, and fulfill them.
Bring them all back.

Bring back your regrets and fears,
But only as pale memories.
All the love surrounding you,
That's what you' bring back.

You packed so much, so much.
Your Pack was filled to the brim.
Your Pack is filled to the brim.
With everything that you've just brought back.

Katie Martin

My experience in Cairo was a breath of fresh air and spiritual nourishment for my soul. When I returned home, I was so moved by my time that I was compelled to do more. My husband, sister and I organized a fund raiser so that could provide much needed supplies for the sight in Cairo. We financially and personally went out on a limb in this project. In a time when no one has spare money and a long list of good causes, we outreached to them. Below is the letter that I sent to every person that I have contact information for.

Hello Family and loved ones

Last week, 52 highschoolers and 9 chaperones traveled to Cairo, IL for a mission trip organized by our church, St. Julie Billiart. While we were there, we got to know some amazing teens, did God's work, and made a difference in a decaying town. Cairo was damaged by the recent flooding. They have an over 70% unemployment rate, and there is no educational structure.

While we were there we were able to see that, despite the odds, Cairo is a town of hope. They have an unbelievable faith in Christ and know that he is protecting them. Youthworks, the organization that hosted us, gives the children of Cairo a safe and positive place to spend their summer days, called Kids Club. While we were there the teens painted houses, provided labor for those less fortunate, taught Bible verses, and played games with the youth.

In getting to know the Youthworks staff, we were made aware of gross deficiencies in supplies. They need school supplies and art supplies to keep Kids Club thriving. They also need supplies to use on the work sites to fix up houses. We have taken it upon ourselves to do what we can to help the community of Cairo, as they are fighting to become a healthy community. The supplies that are most needed are:

- drop-cloths
- masks to use while painting
- paint brushes
- Kids Club snacks- (non-perishable)- juice boxes, granola bars
- construction paper
- chalk
- water toys

The children who attend Kids Club play and learn about the Bible in a fenced in yard that has no relief from sunshine. In addition to school supplies, we are taking it upon ourselves to try and raise money to purchase them a canopy tent. They are also in need of paint to continue to rehab houses. All money raised will be used to purchase an awning and buy paint.

This community has touched our hearts and now we are reaching out to you. Anything that you can contribute would be appreciated beyond belief.

If you are local and are able to drop supplies off, please do so at St Julie's Youth office, there will be a box for you there:

7399 W 159th Street
Tinley Park, IL 60477
(708) 429-6767

Or if you are able to mail donations, please make them out to "St. Julie TNT", and please mail them to:
Youthworks Donations c/o
7401 W. 163rd Place
Tinley Park, IL 60477

The Youthworks staff is selflessly devoting their summers to spreading God's message. They know nothing of the efforts we are making to help Cairo. We are taking this goal upon ourselves. I know that times are tough for all, but please help us make this happen for Cairo. You can also help by spreading this message to those you know who have a big heart.

If you have any questions, please let us know

Katie Martin

Through donations and hard work, we were able to send a 12 by 12 canopy to Cairo. We were also able to purchase enough paint to completely paint 3 houses. We also provided enough food for the children attending Kids Club to have snacks the duration of the summer. I feel so blessed that so many great and generous people in my life. If it weren't for them, none of this would have been possible.

Ryan McQuinn Mission 2/11/11

I sat here for about 10 minutes with a blank page in front of me. This week was truly indescribable. Now, I know that I've said this in the past, but this mission trip was the best week of my life. I became much closer to God, and to everyone from our church. OSC was the best decision that I had made the whole week. Getting to know the older kids was a blessing, and it was an opportunity that I had not had in the past. I had cried so much in my entire life. Thursday night was an amazing experience. The level of trust and support in that room was amazing, and it brought me to tears. God was present that night. I became really close with a lot of people. I didn't think I was going to be really close to them. I was surprised. I got a page out of his. This week was truly INDESCRIBABLE.

Cairo Mission Trip 2011

Jimmy McGuire

In the days before we departed from the church I was anticipating how much fun I would have. At one point I could barely fall asleep. Cairo was my second mission trip and at this point I kind of knew what to expect so I set a goal for myself. Last year in Tallulah I was very shy and didn't talk a lot. This year I made a point to myself that I would step out of my comfort zone and try to be myself around the kids as well as my peers. I feel that I surpassed this goal with flying colors and I could tell I and the people around me were having a great time.

Something else I had experienced was during the week was the sheer power of God in our lives. On Thursday night this was very apparent. I could feel that he was with all of us and will be with us always, especially in our times of need. During that time the room was overflowing with love and friendship with in our church and even with the girls from the other church. It's so amazing how kids can become so close when they are all working for God and making an entire community happy just from little things like playing catch with a kid or sitting and listening to the seniors when they usually don't have that.

All in all this week was a definite life changer for me and probably all of the rest of the kids. I know that I will have lifelong relationships with the kids in my church and other churches we will meet in the future. I plan on going to every mission trip that I can and carry out the work of God through my actions.

Cairo Mission Trip 2011 Reflection

By: Michelle Rubino

God has a plan for everyone and he showed me that when I went to Cairo, IL. I learned that it's not about what you wear or what you have; if you just show people you care, that's all they need. Show them that there is hope and that there is a chance. Seeing the kids of Cairo showed me that if you just do the simplest thing like reading to them or playing some music for them, it makes them so happy. If the kids want piggy back rides for an hour you'll do it because it means so much to them and it might be the highlight of their summer.

Mission Trip 2011 changed part of my life. It made me realize how much the littlest things you can do mean so much to some people. Like the woman's house I worked on with my group; she was so thankful that she took what little she had and bought us fruit. But some people down there don't have something to give back so all they can say is "thank you;" but even just saying that is enough to show that we made a difference by going there. We made somebody else have less to worry about.

Each day while I was on Mission Trip I was just thinking about the next day and how we would make an even bigger difference than the day before. We would have even more memories and pictures to tell and show our friends and families when we got back. But unlike us some people don't get to share those pictures. I learned that when we were in our small groups one night. One of my friends in the group was telling us about how she was taking pictures of a little girl and the little girl went up to her mom so happy and was telling her mom how she took pictures of her. The mother came up to her and asked her if she could somehow send them the pictures of her daughter because she doesn't have a single picture of her daughter. I thought that was so sad because can you imagine not having a single picture of your friends or family members? Walking around your entire house and not having one picture of maybe your cousin, your parents, or your grandparents? When its only 15 cents to get a photo printed at Walgreens.

Everyday in Cairo was a new experience. You learned more about the people there and about God. We had our own devotion time in the morning where we would have a book and answer questions about our faith and God. We had club at night where we got to sing and praise God. We also had our activities at night after we were at worksites and kids club. One night we went on a scavenger hunt and ended up at "The Cross." Which is a giant beautiful cross that we took pictures in front of. We also went bowling and went to a Mass. We had a picnic dinner another night and a barbeque on the last night for all the families of Cairo that wanted to come.

Seeing all the families and kids in Cairo together made me realize God does work in mysterious ways. He shows the people of Cairo that there is hope by sending them YouthWorks and St. Julie T.N.T. The work we did at Cairo has made a difference even though it was only a few houses. And what we continue to do there and other places over time will help so many more people. It will change the lives of the people there but it will also change us in ways that will make us want to do more work for God and understand his plans for us.

On Mission Trip I got so close with so many people that I would have never expected to grow close to. That's one of the great things about T.N.T. you go on a trip and work and get sweaty and bond with people that you never thought you would. You could be going on your first mission trip with the church and not know a single person there and they just walk up and start talking to you. By the time you come back from your trip you feel as if you have known them longer than a week.

We also got to meet some people from another church in Indiana. We got to learn about them and their religion. We also got to work with them in kids club and worksite. We got so close with the girls from that church too. It's interesting to meet people from other churches from around the country.

The experience from a trip like this is an experience like no other. You learn about the people and how hard it's been for them to survive. The woman's house we painted, her daughter told us about her life and how they use to always hang out at the dairy hut but then it closed so now they don't have anywhere to hang out. And seeing the kids at kids club how they are different from kids here. We can joke around and we know we are just kidding with each other, but for them they don't understand sarcasm or joking around. They think you are serious.

God challenges us in many ways too. He throws different things at us hoping we will get the right answers and reasons for things. Also that it will change in ways that make us more like Him. He hopes that we learn from the experiences that we have and that we use what we learn. What we learned in Cairo will be used to help us with the rest of our journey through life.

Mission Trip 2011 was one of the best trips of my life. I will never forget the things I did and the people I met. I hope that I carry everything I learned in Cairo with me for the rest of my life. I can't wait to see what the trip is for next year and what we are going to be doing. I hope that I get to learn even more on the next trip and met more people.

Abbey Evans

My first mission trip was the best week I've ever had. This trip changed the way I thought on so many things, but the two in general that stuck to my mind are to appreciate the gifts I have and treat others the way God tells us to. To begin my reflection I know that almost every kid in Cairo has hope for their community. None of them have anything close to what kids in our town have, such as cell phones, iPods, cameras, computers, game systems, etc, but they still come to kids' club everyday with compassion and a big smile on their face.

When I first got to church to put my things in the vans, I had no idea what to expect for the upcoming week. All of my friends from TNT told me it was "awesome" and "the best week of the summer", so I went on from then with an open mind. As we arrived in this poverty-filled town, I could not believe my eyes. To think how these people live in houses that were in such terrible shape blew my mind, better yet to think how these people could live in a weakly-built house in a town that was just overflowed with gallons and gallons of water from the Mississippi River was astonishing!

Furthermore, we came to Cairo because we wanted to help others that needed support.