

Wednesday, June 23

For me, Haiti was always just another week on the calendar, just something else that I could cram into my crazy summer. I guess I had forgotten what a special place this is and how much all of this really does mean to me.

Today our group split-up. Some of us went to Don Don to do a clinic, and the rest of us went back to Manna to do some more construction and another VBS. I went to Manna. When we first got there, we got the chance to go to the children of the Promise, an orphanage for the rejected children of Haiti. It is almost impossible to hold those babies and look into their eyes and not feel a piece of your heart breaking. After hugging the last baby goodbye, we headed back to the Manna campground to do some construction...476 buckets of cement later, we ate lunch. Then VBS began and tons of kids rushed in to sing songs like fuzzy caterpillar, the hippo song, and I'm in the Lord's army. The adults decided to let the teens lead the VBS stations which was a beautiful thing. After VBS we packed up and rode back to the hotel. This day added to the many lessons that God has taught me throughout the rest of the trip. So far this week has showed me that Haiti is way more than just a week on the calendar, it's a life-changing experience...every time. Emily Ann

This week has been an amazing and life changing experience. Today, half of us went to the clinic and the other half went back to the Manna compound to help with VBS. Most of the teens went to help Manna. So in the morning we worked and in the afternoon we did VBS. The work was hard but I know that the children that we helped today will never forget us. At the end of the day we always talk about who we saw Jesus in. I saw Jesus in the sweet little old woman that came to the clinic yesterday and the small, adorable, shining babies' faces at the children of the promise. I loved getting to know the children and playing with them. Reagan and I met 3 other 13 year olds, and they seemed sooo amazed that we were the same age as them. I learned all these little hand games with them. I had soooo much fun with them. It made me realize that even though we are from different places and speak different languages, we can still laugh and have fun. I love the fact that they love Jesus just like I do. If I have learned anything about the Haitians this week, it's that they honestly care about you. And they really have a heart for God and love praise Him. I will remember this trip and these children for the rest of my life. And I hope those 3 girls will remember me too. Allie Ray

Well its official, I can mark passing buckets of cement off my Bucket List! Our group of 14 who worked at the Manna Compound today was awesome! It started off great when we got to ride in a Haitian Limo, actually a 15 passenger van with A/C, but might as well be a limo here. We arrived at Manna and were told we could go to Children of the Promise. Our team held babies that the interns said they had never seen another team hold before because they had hydrocephalus and cerebral palsy. I held a 4 year old with cerebral palsy which was new for me but he blessed me so much by smiling as I sang Jesus Loves You and Jesus Loves the Little Children. It broke my heart as I laid him down and he cried, but I know he is greatly cared for by the wonderful Haitian nannies. Our teamwork was great and so efficient as we roofed a storeroom for the kitchen by passing buckets of concrete that were hand mixed with shovels, sand and water. Everyone, especially the young people, worked so hard without complaining

and we were a well-oiled machine by 2 pm when we broke for lunch. Of course just as we finished, it began to rain as God has continued to bless us to do what needs to be done and even gives us a shower and breeze. At 3 pm we began the VBS for kids in the community. We did one on Monday and some of the kids were the same but they enjoyed it all over again! Of course our group was “flexible” as we learned we would only have 2 translators and have to combine 2 of the stations. It is always great for me to see everyone experience Haiti for the first time, especially experiencing it with Ashleigh. I love to see people fall in love with missions and experience Jesus by visiting their brothers/sisters from around the world. I knew God had a plan for me being here this year.-Shelly

I remember this picture Shelly and I made 10 years ago with a donkey on the road. We were posing and we thought it was the coolest thing. After the blessing of being called into missions by God the Donkey is now a Donkey. It has its purpose. Today sometimes I don't see things the way I used to see things, but I still get to see and experience the coolest things with the people we bring to Haiti. Some of the highlights are:

- There is the good old fashioned fellowship at the dinner table
- Then in the middle of organized chaos you will see doctors and nurses praying with the Haitians
- Talking with other missionaries and hearing the frustrations and triumphs brings back great memories of how faithful Jesus has been in our journey
- Seeing people that come take those steps out of their comfort zone and finding Jesus waiting for them there on the other side
- Bobby Ray leading singing in Blackout
- Of course there are sayings like: “Lower your expectations and this will be great or super duty, duty free, dare to duty, duty or bust, Don't forget your duties” that you only think are funny if you are on the trip. While playing games it is always fun to see the different sides of people come out.
- I enjoy spending time with my brothers and sisters that I normally only get to say Hi to for only a few minutes at church.
- Hearing stories of how God has pursued Haitians who were hurt, struggling or poor become active members of His Kingdom

One of the most priceless things this trip is seeing the faces of these proud parents and grand parents as they see our young adults grow in Christ. Thank you to our friends that have created these memories over the years. You know who you are! Thank you to our co-leaders the Rays and Clear Creek for sending us to experience Jesus around the world.-Jake