

Mississippi Trip 2011

We left Sunday morning at approximately 3:30 a.m. The bus ride took about 13 hours including stops. The states we passed through were Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, and arrived in Clarksdale, Mississippi for our first meal. After the meal all five groups went to their different locations.

I was in a new group in Jonestown that stayed with Sister Kay. When we arrived at the house we met sister Kay and went over the ground rules of the house and what our tasks were. We planned to work on Freticia's house on Monday because it was Martin Luther King day and no schools would be in session. Tuesday through Friday we went to the Jonestown Elementary school and tutored the students.

The first night at sister Kay's allowed everybody in the group to get to know each other.

Monday January 17th

- We did not go to the school today because it was Martin Luther King day and school was not in session. We instead worked on a house of a local residents. The house was in rough shape so we decided to clean the siding and scrape off old paint. We painted the scraped parts white and painted in all nails. We also repaired old and rotted boards if needed. Honestly our work was good but we did not have the tools or resources to fix it like it should have been done. Working together allowed us to gain friendships on this day because we were having fun and doing something productive.

Tuesday January 18th

This was our first day at Jonestown Elementary School. Going into this day I did not know what to expect. The first thing that I noticed was the good shape of the school. The school was clean and well kept up. I was placed in Mr. Cook's math class for the week with another group member, Tim. Mr. Cook taught two fifth grade math classes and one fourth grade.

At the beginning the students seemed hesitant to use our help or even talk to us. After a couple classes they seemed to warm up to us and call us by name. I was really surprised by the welcome and attitudes I got from most of the students. They were very eager to learn and would ask me questions about my life or college. At the end of the day I knew I was going to enjoy the rest of the week at the school. Mr. Cook was also very welcoming and gave us advice about teaching and working with kids.

Wednesday January 19th

- The second day at school was more exciting for me because I knew what to expect. We had breakfast in the morning at Sister Kay's. We all pitched in to make that meal. I became more acquainted with the students as the day grew on. I talked with a few students about why I was there and some about themselves. After school I went to basketball practice that Mr. Cook coached.

I'm also a coach and love sports
so I enjoyed the practice.

Thursday January 20th

This day was our third day at school so
the students were getting to know us well and
called us by name. The teachers were starting
to wear down because it was later in
the week and the school is full of stressful
things going on. We had a potluck on this
night a Jonestown.

Friday January 21st

This was our last day at the school.
The students that I had come to know
fairly well were disappointed that it was
our last day. I just tried to make it
fun for them yet still teaching them
mathematics. At supper time we
went to Tutweiler and ate as a
whole group. This was the best
meal of the trip. The food was
delicious. After the trip we went
to Grand Zero, Morgan Freeman's
bar. This was a blues bar and it
was very unique. I enjoyed myself
and had a good time with the new people

I had met.

Saturday January 28nd

We left for home at 10:00 a.m.

We stopped at the National Civil Rights Museum. This was an interesting visit to see all the things the black people went through. The bus ride home seemed rather long but was a good time to reflect on the trip.