



"I do not agree with what you have to say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it." - Voltaire

"Feeding the Soul of the City: A Reflection of the Spring 2007 Mission Trip to Washington, DC"

Melissa Whittaker

I came back from my alternative spring break mission trip and wow. It opened my eyes so much. We helped out at soup kitchens and some other places in Washington, DC. I had always been taught to basically ignore or avoid homeless people but most of them were actually pretty nice and even though they're looking for some money, if you don't have any to give them, just saying "hello" also brightens their day. One of my friends gave someone \$10 and a few others gave a guy some Vitamin Water and fries and stuff. We learned so much from the workshops and everything we had, too. We learned that homeless people and poverty stricken people (10% of poverty stricken are homeless) are just like you and me. They're looking for money, food, shelter, and more importantly love and respect. While I'm still hesitant to open my wallet on a city street, I plan on keeping some money in my pocket next time I'm in a city like D.C. or N.Y. so that I can donate money to these people. Most major cities have newspapers that people who have been homeless sell for donations. We had a few different workshops, including one about homelessness, one about hunger and one about HIV and AIDS. Our last workshop was a writing workshop reflecting something about the week that we liked. Jesi wrote a story that touched everyone in the room and Lebda and Susan wrote nice poems. I, being the shy girl I sometimes am, was hesitant at first to say what I wrote but I finally decided to. (I did add about how I'm usually not one to raise my hand or share my thoughts in classes and how I'm almost always quiet in them).



St. Andrews members preparing food at the Soup Kitchen. (from left to right): Melissa Whittaker, Kathryn Lebda, and Jim Ewing. Picture courtesy of Lyndsey McCall.

At first I wasn't sure what to think about this trip since it wasn't my first choice. But I really enjoyed it so much! (well, except for getting up early each morning - hehe -- I'm not a morning person). Loveaya, Paul, Jesi, Jess, Lyndsey, Lebda, Noel, Garrett, Chris, Reid, Susan, Veronica, J-me, Brandy, Ashley, and Rachel also went on the trip. And we had 3 awesome chaperones- Jim Ewing, Jenn Bruner and Dan Ott. We stayed at The Pilgrimage in the basement and slept on bunk beds; the Pilgrimage is a

church in Dupont Circle, one of the more ritzy parts of the city. One of the groups I was in (for Monday and Friday), I wasn't with my closer friends but I was always with some friends I know but don't talk to all the time. It worked out though, as it got me to be a little more social. On Monday, my group helped out at the Church of the Brethren. It was small and there weren't a lot of people who showed up. We were told that this is because some of the people have money left over in the beginning of the month. We prepared lunch by cutting up potatoes and pouring grease out of cans of chicken and then going through them to take out the bones. It was gross, especially seeing how much grease was in the cans-and we had to use a lot of canned chicken! Then we got to help serve the lunches to the people who came by. We also had a chance to mingle with the people, although I just stayed in the kitchen and observed. Some of the people seemed to not want to be bothered, but many of them were friendly and had a good sense of humor. On Tuesday we switched up the groups a bit and my group helped out at Food and Friends. Some of the people in the group bagged food up, while Lebda, Jim and I packaged food into containers. We had to get a photo out by the Food and Friends bus after we finished. Wednesday brought us to DC Central Kitchen, where we again prepared and packaged food to go out to people. This time I worked with Jess and Veronica in the kitchen, chopping up carrots and putting pieces of chicken into pans to go to families. We worked with Chef Ernesto, the best chef ever! Quite a few of us also bought hoodies from DC Central Kitchen, where they are "feeding the soul of the city." On Thursday my group helped out cleaning at Christian Community Group Homes. It's a group home for the elderly. Toward the end of working there, some of us watched a bit of "The Price Is Right" on the TV there, haha. Friday was the day when the other group went to Church of the Brethren and my group went to So Others Might Eat (SOME). Originally we thought that we were going to do the same thing the other group did-prepare and serve food in the kitchen. Nope. We were in the warehouse, sorting through packages with soaps, shampoos, notebooks, toys, etc. We also had to fill a cart with lots of cans of green beans; for that we had an assembly line going-yay for teamwork! We didn't watch TV and didn't have internet access or anything at the Pilgrimage, so we colored pictures from a coloring book that Jesi brought, played cards and played MASH. Another group, from UNC-Greensboro,

was staying at the Pilgrimage, too. We also made something called Warm Fuzzies. It's where you decorate a bag with your name and then you write messages to others and slip them into everyone else's bags when they're not around. Then at the end you can read your "warm fuzzies." They can reflect something about the week that you enjoyed with the other people and they can be uplifting and bring a smile to your face; a message can be as simple as "It was great getting to know you better this week. It's been wonderful!" The warm fuzzies I got are probably going in my scrapbook of the trip that I'll be making this summer. I may just have to use that idea with the Girl Scout troop I help out with.

We also had some free time and went to the Holocaust museum on Tuesday, March 6th. That was an interesting museum though we had to ponder why most of our characters survived when I heard most of them don't. We went to the monuments on our own time: I saw the White House, Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial and WWII memorial when I walked around the city at night with Lyndsey, Lebda, Veronica, Garrett, Noel, Paul and Jenn. On Wednesday night we ate out at Ben's Chili Bowl, which we heard is pretty famous in DC and on Thursday a bunch of us traveled to the zoo. Friday was spent helping gather ideas for the poster our group made (every group that stays at the Pilgrimage makes a poster) and shopping at Union Station. It was just a week full of "awesomesauce" and probably the best spring break of college I've had so far! My Spring Break is definitely full of memories, like seeing all the smiles on the different people we helped, and when it snowed on Wednesday and we were all throwing snowballs at each other. And also, playing Catch Phrase at night and just plain hanging out with everyone. I'm wicked glad for everything I have and I'm glad for what I learned this week. It's been one of the best experiences I've had and I'm so glad I went on the Mission Trip of Spring 2007! (Oh and P.S., "I'm a Scat Man!")

For more information on Hunger and Homelessness, visit these websites: www.capitalareafoodbank.org: Capital Area Food Bank website www.frac.org: Food Research Action Committee website. www.bread.org: Bread for the World Website (includes emails to the White House and Congress, so you can help make a difference by writing letters to them). www.thehungersite.com: Sponsored by corporate donors, click to donate food globally at no cost. <http://www.thepilgrimage.org>.

SAPC Mission Trip to Washington DC

Jamie Nickolson

This spring break I chose a different experience than that of the year prior which I spent in the nice Florida sunshine. Washington D.C. sounded fun to me and helping out the poor and homeless wasn't a bad trade off to go to a wonderful city. I came back loving the fact that I helped people and loving the people I helped more than I even loved the visit and the city, which I was most anticipating in the beginning. We worked in various soup kitchens, organized warehouses of donated items for the poor, had a few previously homeless people speak to us, and even visited the local hot spots in the city. It was a truly touching trip and it changed my heart as I know it did my friends that also went. We met a wonderful man named David Harris, a gifted poet. The last day we were there he came and spoke to us about creative writing and had us write a reflection on the week. It was a very touching experience and a bonding one for all of us. I have been recently studying topics in social justice a lot so I tied those things into my reflection. The response I got was quite comical but very encouraging; I was told "you should be the next president!" I am not too sure about that but I am hoping by sharing what I wrote it will inspire thoughts in someone else's mind as well and possibly move this campus toward an outlook of kindness and love for those who have been oppressed.

We came up here to make an impact on the homeless people of DC's lives. Instead something else entirely happened; they had the most profound impact on me. They taught me the tragedy of this nation, culture, and these external capitalistic forces. These people I have met from David and Brenda, to the random people on the street I've talked to, to those I have fed at a soup kitchen have dramatically changed my life. I never knew the importance of a smile or hello. I never knew the importance of mutual relation both to keep off the

streets and to survive on the streets. Our nation, through its culture, policies, and individualistic ideals, drives most of us daily to lose all mutuality between one another, drives us to step on one another to get where we are going, and enables us to pursue only economic gain with total disregard for the true fulfillment in life such as love, justice, and God. This type of culture certainly breeds oppression as well. We need justice and freedom from oppression; life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are our rights but someone has voided those rights out for some of us. In my fight for equality to come against the injustices of sexism, racism, and speciesism I now join in fighting against classism. We cannot as single individual forces on this earth believe that anything about us is better or worth more than the attributes someone else has. It is arrogant to think that money, sexuality, race, religion, or gender makes anyone better or more worthy of power than the next person. I suggest instead we use this power we gain to help our oppressed people and bring them up to equality with us and those around us. This week has been amazing for me to see ways of bringing freedom to the people being oppressed by this economical "rat race" based on classism. My eyes have truly been opened and my perspectives broadened.



St. Andrews members by the bus. (from left to right): Veronica Gobeyn, Jessy Gesel, Loveaya Magnus, Paul Benzie, Melissa Whittaker, Brandy Gilbride, Jessy Bewley, Kathryn Lebda, Jim Ewing, Chris Bennett and Lyndsey McCall. Picture courtesy of Melissa Whittaker.

Lions of St. Andrews Rejuvenating Dogwood Mile

Reid Mosher



St. Andrews campus Lions at the District Convention in Southern Pines, NC. (Left to Right): Lyndsey McCall, Danielle Heider, Zach Long, Andy Maginn, Melisa Whittaker and Marshall Fuller. Picture courtesy of Lyndsey McCall.

"It just wouldn't be Dogwood Mile without the Dogwoods!" are the words that Steve James spoke recently about the fungal blight attacking some of St Andrews most valued trees. "We want to re-plant some of the Dogwoods." says James. The trees, planted in the early 60's have an average lifespan of 100 years but have long since reached maturity, and some of them are showing signs of weakening. If ever you get a chance to flip through the triple thick Lamp and Shield yearbook of 1971, you would find prose commenting on

the hope for the future of the then "prepubescent trees" and what the might come from their maturity.

The re-planting of the Dogwoods is important to the Lions Club and is one of a series of projects that they will be undertaking as "campus betterment activities" to raise money for the club and enhance the natural beauty of the campus and its surroundings.

Working alongside Nick, one of the head Landscapers on campus, several young students will get their hands in the soil and learn some tips and techniques of successful tree planting. The first date for planting is scheduled for March 31st, to be followed by further Saturdays. The Lions of St Andrews are looking for anyone interested in helping to renew the Dogwoods or contribute money to go towards buying new trees for the campus. Those interested are encouraged to join the "Lions of St Andrews" facebook group online or contact Andy Maginn or Reid Mosher for more details.