

AFRICAN TRIP: they'll never forget

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perspective on their own middle-class lifestyles.

"I was really shocked," said Dellinger, who heads off to Appalachian State University this fall to study elementary education. "But it was amazing how nice everybody was. No matter what their circumstances, they were very happy and positive."

Dellinger is no stranger to foreign travel and to seeing people live without the comforts she is used to. She was part of a mission trip to Honduras this winter where she worked in a vacation bible school and at feeding centers in the impoverished Central American country. She looks to make a similar trip to the small country this December. She has also visited a handful of other Central and South American countries, including Belize. She's the daughter of Liza and Bryan Dellinger and has a sister and a brother, Virginia and Ward.

"Going to Kenya completely changed my perspective on a lot of things," said Barnes, who this fall will be attending Appalachian to study nursing. "It humbled me in ways I never thought was possible, it opened my eyes to all of the good things I have in my life, it made me realize just how blessed I really am..."

In addition to a family vacation in Mexico, Barnes had also participated in a mission trip in Jamaica at the age of 13. Barnes' parents are Shane and Dana Barnes and Fonda and Peter Williams. She has a younger sister, Carly.

During the young women's two-week stay in Kenya, they were able to do more than pray with HIV-positive infants and young children and lead bible lessons with deaf children. The length of the trip afforded them a little free time to see some of the breathtaking flora and fauna that are native to eastern Africa, such as giraffes, zebras, lions and monkeys.

The two joined larger groups for both a walking safari and an extended safari through the wilds of

the renowned Maasai Mara National Reserve, a roughly 600 square mile national park.

"It was amazing," Dellinger said, adding she and others on the safari were lucky in their timing because they were able to witness the Great Migration, an annual phenomenon that sees tens of thousands of wildebeests travel from the southern Serengeti, in neighboring Tanzania, into regions of Kenya.

"The pictures I took don't begin to do justice to what I actually saw, actually being there," said Dellinger, who has intermediate fluency in Spanish and says she would like to live more permanently abroad some day. She already has plans to possibly study abroad in the fall of 2016, likely in Costa Rica or Mexico.

Barnes' and Dellinger's trip was in conjunction with an organization called Love Africa Missions. The two had to raise about \$3,000 each to make the trip.

But the experiences they gained were, according to them, close to priceless.

"(At the orphanage) they were so open to loving you and all they wanted was for you to love them. They longed for our attention and for us to play with them constantly," Barnes said, adding that she is eager to return to Africa for a similar mission trip down the road. "At Little Lambs, I formed a relationship with a little boy named John. I absolutely love him. He has a twin brother named Simon and they are orphans. Both of their parents passed away due to AIDS and both little boys are living with HIV. They live with their blind grandmother who is bedridden."

"(It really made me appreciate my parents and the simple fact that I was able to drive 10 minutes to go to Kings Mountain High School Monday through Friday. They don't have that luxury, and if they want to go to school they have to walk. It's pitiful and seeing that made me want to give them everything I have just so they can have a better life."

In the summer between high school and college, MC Dellinger and Lindsey Barnes, two Kings Mountain women made a mission trip to a poor region in Africa where they volunteered at an orphanage, a school for the deaf and toured the wild country.



MC Dellinger, far left, and Lindsey Barnes, seated on floor, join others on their Love Africa Mission for a group photo.

SCENES FROM THE AFRICAN MISSION TRIP



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