



Dominican Trip

A Reflection by Remy B., '07

This past March break I traveled to the Dominican Republic (D.R.) with Aubrey Lam, Justin Lee, Kelly Tong, Suzie Yin, Thomas Ridout, Mr. Csinos, and Mr. Lama. Our total trip group of seventy people, from schools across the country, worked in a total of six communities. We did so much in two weeks: repairing schools, fixing desks, working on foundations, visiting hospitals, working with children, milk ministries, teaching English, visiting factories, and even killing foot-long centipedes in some cases. I could regurgitate every event and detail of our trip, but I figure it would not mean much to whoever is reading this, if you have not been able to experience it yourself. So instead, this is my reflection on what 336 in the Dominican Republic means to me...

There is science, logic, reason; there is thought verified by experience. And then there is the Dominican Republic. Go! See! And Do! – More than an experience. I am the sort of person who would love to stand before you and convey passionately how this trip impacted me, to express everything I feel, and all the things I was fortunate enough to experience. So you can imagine how hard it is to be restricted to mere words on paper, and yet try reflecting on the entirety of my journey to the Dominican Republic. Ask me to write an essay, even an entire book on the 336 Hours trip and I could do it! But one little article, man...that's the hardest thing.

The country itself is stunning - breathtakingly gorgeous! Often as we drove from place to place in the buses, with our wonderful bus drivers, I could not stop looking at the trees and how big and lush they were. The trees are something that I can still picture vividly in my mind. But what has stayed with me the most are the Dominicans themselves. Never have I encountered such warmth in people and strength in community. It really placed things in perspective for me, and I realized how we have as many things to learn from them as they do from us, if not, more.

Heading into the trip, I had been considering studying international development after high school, yet I had no idea as to what I really wanted to do with such a degree. Let alone, what I saw myself doing career wise. So there was a considerable amount of doubt in my future. The D.R. trip, one event in particular, struck me deep inside and helped me discover some things about myself. During the end of the second and final week of our trip, we were leaving the village of Ascension. It was our last day of work in the village, where we had been helping to build a Co-Op Centre for women. As we loaded onto the bus, there was a woman from the community who said to us, "We pray for you. All we ever do is pray for you." I know that I will never forget those words and what I felt in that moment. Because it was in that moment when everything made sense - I knew what I truly wanted to do with the rest of



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my life. Not only that, but I felt confident in this destiny. I knew that I was bound for a life of service, to bring about change and to help ones in need.

As we all grow and change, each of us is bound to define life for ourselves, and by finding this meaning we are able to truly start living as an individual. I don't intend to say that traveling to the D.R. taught me the 'grand meaning of life', no. What I mean is that within me I discerned a kind of purpose for myself. I learned that my purpose, my want in life, is to be a human, helping and serving other humans in need. Trips like these are ambiguous; people will learn completely different things, but all through the same experience. And to me, that's the beauty of an adventure like this.

So for anyone who might be reading this, and is considering signing up for something similar to this: do it! DO IT! There are few things that I am 100% sure of, but the fact that you will not regret a trip like this is one thing I promise. You'll do it within an amazing group of people who will become your friends. Along with remarkable teachers, filled with wisdom. And I don't think I've mentioned the fun. 336 Hours, in my opinion, is an epitome of sheer FUN! It is not an exaggeration in me telling you that journeying to the D.R. was some of the two happiest weeks of my life so far. The gut wrenching laughs that I shared with friends (and teachers) is another thing I still remember perfectly... and feel so nostalgic about.

Traveling to the Dominican Republic is not going to change you in the same way that it changed me, but I believe it will change you in some way – big or small. This trip will teach you things you cannot learn in a classroom. You will experience life in unfathomable ways. You will learn things about yourself you probably didn't even know. I know I did.

If you would like more information on Power Trips please visit their website at www.powertripsinc.org

