

In a world that headlines the war in Middle East and the conflict in Syria, or the recent shooting in Washington DC, you begin to wonder if there is any good left or if there is a way to make a difference. I was given that chance to be the difference this year, having the full intentions of going on a humanitarian mission to help an underdeveloped community on a separate continent, but remarkably I wound up with new perspectives.

This summer I had the experience of a life time. I went on a trip to another country. I went to Africa! I went to Africa on a mission trip to help build a hospital for the people who don't have the opportunities we do, and for the people who have to travel at least 12 miles a day on foot for the nearest hospital. This moment was a life changing event; it made me realize how lucky I really am, how important it is to be educated, and how important it is to live in the moment. The trip to Africa this summer showed me that the opportunities that I have in my life I should take and make the best out of them.

I think, one of the moments in the trip that affected me the most was when a 12 year old boy named Brian came to the camp with a swollen knee. He had been playing soccer, not unlike anything I have ever done, but he fell and scrapped his knee. He did not have access to clean water or Band-Aids and washed the cut out with water from a lake. Infection had set in so bad, that even his bone was infected. Brian and his father had walked seven miles to reach our medical camp. The young boy could barely walk. He had a limp, but not once did I see him wince in pain. He used two sticks to help him walk. When I was with him in the tent, he wanted nothing more than to be able to walk and play with his friends. We have since heard, he may have to have his leg amputated. This made me realize the simple things I take for granted, like clean water to wash out a cut and a Band-Aid to keep dirt out until it heals.

After meeting this incredible boy I was amazed at the site I saw. It was a experience to see someone who had very little and having such a hard time because he did not have access to clean water nor did he have the knowledge of taking care of a simple scrape. These are the things that we American's find simple and easy. I was amazed to hear him tell about his struggles and how he has dealt with what had happened to him. When I heard this from this boy, I realized everything that I have, my

friends have, and that you may have, are things Brian has never and may never experience in his life. They are the little things we take for granted and are the things that could change someone's life with a blink of an eye. Another example, I gave this young male a bracelet I was wearing on my wrist, you can't imagine the smile he had, it was so big, and almost like he had just received a priceless gift. He was just happy to be important to someone and be recognized.

When I left Kenya to go to Uganda for a plane to go home, Brian was in the hospital in Kenya getting further test and procedures done so that he could keep his leg and save his life. He had to undergo blood transfusions and several small surgeries and will have to do physical therapy to strengthen his femur. All of this is just an attempt to save his whole leg from being amputated up to his hip. Brian today is at home on oral antibiotics to cut down the infection and still doing physical therapy. The goal is to get him healthy enough to survive the amputation. Brian was a warrior in my eyes, he fought through the pain, he did the impossible, and he kept his head up the whole time, and didn't let anything bother him. He was my life changing experience this year, to see a boy younger than me have so many struggles and yet achieve at what he could do with the complications he had to face every second of everyday. Because of what Brian has done, I feel as if I have stepped up and achieved more, and haven't worried about the little things. I realize that even though I may not have everything that is popular or the current trend, I have a lot to be thankful for, and equally important, I know that I have the ability to change a life, just like Brian and my trip to Africa changed me. If there was one thing I would tell Brian today, would be thank you for opening my eyes and mind to a brighter side of life.