

Santo Domingo, RD



Mike Lavelle and I decided to spend our six-week summer of service in the capital of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo. Although this inner city was not the first place I thought of as I was considering places to serve, we decided that it provided an opportunity that no other site could. First and foremost, we were excited about serving and hoped for a location that could really use our time and effort. Secondly, as Spanish minors, we looked for a place that would allow us to practice our Spanish language skills. We decided that our summer would be best spent at “La Posada del Buen Samaritano”, which translates to “The Inn of the Good Samaritan”.



At the inn, we helped out a nun named Sister Babs from Long Island. She has lived in the house for over twenty years, taking in those individuals from the countryside. These people need to stay in the capital, as it is the only place they can receive medical treatment. However, most of the people from these rural areas do not have money or family in the city, thus, it is difficult for them to get the treatment they need. Sister Babs provides a home and transportation to those that cannot afford to stay in Santo Domingo for extended periods of time.



Mike and I painting the walls of our fence and house.

As part of our service, we looked at the results of the patient's tests and explained their issues to them, drove patients to and from appointments, accompanied them during their appointments making sure they received proper treatment and did random house keeping activities around the house we lived in.



Results for one of the patients



We saw some beautiful things on our summer of service, as well as some very frightening critters. The tropical-like climate allows for insects as seen above to be all over the place, even within the city. Although some of these things were scary, the beautiful wildlife balanced it out. Flowers like the ones seen below were commonplace. It was amazing to see things like this.



While we were there, we saw unbelievable things that will be in my mind forever. We saw poverty that cannot even be imagined. For example, the house below was our next-door neighbor. There were about 20 people living in that home. As I was leaving I took one last look at this place and realized that I had changed from this experience. When I first signed up to participate in the summer of service I figured that I would be helping out those that were underserved. However, as Dr. LaRow mentioned, and what I soon learned after experiencing the Dominican Republic, is that I learned much more about who I am as a person, and what type of person I want to be in the future. This type of poverty and struggle in the world may never be totally eradicated, but I learned that should not matter to me.

Just because there does not appear to be an end, does not mean you shouldn't begin. It is the little steps that matter, and even if one person can benefit.



Jonathan and I playing ping pong. The sister who runs the home took him in from Haiti when we was five after a house fire that left him with burns all over his body.

