

Tara Kelly '12

Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia

During the summer of 2011, I had the experience of a lifetime. I had the opportunity to travel to Chuuk, Micronesia. Kelly Patterson, and I, spent our summer teaching Grammar, Reading and Spelling at the summer school at St. Cecilia's Elementary School. It was some of the best and maybe most challenging times we have ever faced. The people of Micronesia are the kindest and most welcoming people I have ever met.



(Kelly, Carleen, me, Pastora, Angela, and Ercy striking some Chuukese style on Udot)

The trip to Chuuk takes about 36 hours. We stopped in Hawaii on the way, and then took the island hopper plane making 4 stops in Majuro, Marshall Islands; Kwajalein, Marshall Islands; Kosrae, Micronesia; and Pohnpei, Micronesia. We lived on the main island (and capital), Weno, in the Truk Lagoon. We lived at Saramen Chuuk Academy with 2 Jesuit volunteers from America. With the help of the volunteers and our Chuukese family, we were able to explore many of the islands in the lagoon and learn a ton about the culture. Also, we got to learn some of the Chuukese language from our students. We wore traditional clothes including long skirts and/or mumus everyday.



(My students and I)

Their culture is extremely rich, and definitely unique. We learned more from the people of Chuuk than we could have ever given back. The people of Chuuk will always hold a special place in my heart. I have seen some of the most beautiful untouched islands in the world, but more importantly than that I have met some of the most amazing people in the world. The Chuukese we met are family, and we can confidently say, in Chuukese, “Ngang sedi Chuuk” (I am from Chuuk).

To learn more about my summer of service, you can read my blog: <http://chuuksummeradventure.wordpress.com/>



(me, Carleen aka our sister, and Kelly)