

2017 Summer of Service Kolkata, India Kristiana Hanna

This summer I was lucky enough to spend half of my summer of service in India, and the second half in the Bronx, New York. I will describe a typical day in both, and what was so amazing about them each.



This is me and a couple of the other girls that went to India, and we are standing in front of the mother house.

The first day we got to pick from a bunch of different houses, which would all involve different types of service. I knew I wanted to work with younger kids, so I decided to go with Shanti Dan, which was a house for girls aged 13 and up who had both physical and mental disabilities. The second house I chose to work at was Shishu Bhavan, which was an orphanage. Every morning we started the day off with mass at the church. It was at 6 am, but I did not find it hard to wake up any day because we got in the routine from the beginning.



This is just a glimpse of the beautiful artwork that surrounded all of the houses we worked at.

After mass we would go to breakfast with all of the other volunteers. At this point, we did a couple extra prayers, which happened to be my favorite ones from the day. It was really great way to meet the other volunteers, and a positive way to start off the day!



This is a couple of the things we would say in the beginning of the day, before going off with all of the volunteers.

Next we took the bus to our houses. Once we got to the house, we would begin by bringing the laundry up a few flights of stairs, ringing it out, and then hanging it up. This usually took about an

hour and a half. After that, we would have tea time, which was just a chance to relax before the second part of the day.



We took this bus 4 times a day to get to each of our different houses and back.

This second part I thought was a lot harder. We started off with joining the children in some of the classes. This meant that we would join either an arts and crafts session, physical therapy, or anything that was geared towards our interests. I usually went to physical therapy, but there were also a few times they needed decorations for the walls, and I would do that instead.



After that, we went to the room where the girls needed help eating, and would help feed them. For me this was one of the hardest parts because you had to do your best to make sure the kids finished their plates, but I also had a hard time being forceful. It was definitely a challenge, since a lot of the girls were aggressive and did not really want to cooperate.



This was the rooftop that we brought the laundry to every morning. Sometimes we got lucky and there were a lot of volunteers, but one time I had to do it all alone!

After eating, we would take them to the bathroom. This was physically taxing because a lot of them were paralyzed so we needed a couple volunteers to carry them onto the toilets, help clean them, and then bring them to their beds. After they were in their beds, they sometimes peed themselves. This usually only happened with the ones that did not know how to use the toilet when we brought them there, or the ones that were too physically disabled to even be placed on the toilet. We would then clean that up, make sure they were all sleeping and head home for the day.



At this point we had a couple hours break, which I would usually eat and take a nap during. Then we would have to be ready for the second part of the day, which was the orphanage. The orphanage was much less physically taxing, but it was more of an

emotional struggle. The kids were all incredible and so ready to learn! I was so amazed when they would bring paper over to me and ask me to have me teach them english! They were so eager to learn, it was really amazing. I loved the atmosphere of this house, because they did a lot of dancing games, and laughs. We even got to watch a little boy get adopted one time! Overall, the combination of the entire trip was a perfect balance and I loved the experience because it taught me a lot about how to love, and how God can show his presence anywhere.



This was the room that we put all of the kids to sleep in, and where we would see them again the next morning!