

# SUMMER OF SERVICE 2017- SOUTH AFRICA

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This past summer I was fortunate enough to spend an incredible month at Botshabelo, an orphanage an hour outside of Johannesburg, South Africa.









My favorite activity was simply spending time with the children. Whether it was playing a game or just being silly with them, they always could put a smile on my face and we hoped to put one on theirs, too. We taught them a lot of different American games, while they taught us numerous South African games. Although they do not have much at all, they are so happy and grateful for everything they do have. You may not think you can develop a real relationship within just 4 weeks, but I truly came to love these children as if they were my own.



Because these children did not speak my language, every action I carried out meant so much more to me because of the effort I had to put into it. I definitely was not conducting myself in a routine manner anymore. For every thought I wanted to express, I had to think of a way to make all those around me understand. I didn't have to worry about being genuine because everything I did or said, I truly meant and had to think about before I carried out that action or said anything. The children taught me to be sincere in everything I did. They taught me







Although I loved all of the children within the orphanage, I developed a deep connection with one special young boy, Oratile. He always had a huge smile on his face that could light up a room and was such a fun-loving, curious kid. It was especially hard to leave him but I am beyond happy to hear that he is doing great.





On the weekends, we were able to take part in numerous incredible excursions. Two of my favorite included the Lion and Rhino Sanctuary and the Elephant Sanctuary. We clearly were able to get up close and personal with these animals, playing with and even getting to feed them!