

A Phenomenal Trip by Amanda Russo

We landed in St. Lucia on January 5, 2008 with much enthusiasm and anticipation. The culture immediately surrounded us as we traveled to the Pastoral Center, a facility that Good News has the privilege of using throughout the time the group volunteers. The people were friendly and respectful throughout the entire trip. It was inspirational to see all of the Good News members collectively work in the various facilities. Good News built three houses during the time we were in this beautiful country, and there were also opportunities available to us to go to various facilities to work directly with the people of St. Lucia. Amy, Shanna, and I were very interested in serving the people through direct interaction. We went to a school for abused girls, an at-risk facility for boys, the Mother Teresa home, the Women's Prison, a school for students with cognitive disabilities, as well as a nursery. The simple crafts, team building activities, and games that we played impacted the people we served as well as ourselves. The simple discussions and loving interaction truly made the trip an inspirational, life-changing experience.



A TRIPS Reflection by Shanna Sundquist

My "TRIPS moment" happened on the very first day. We went to the Upton Girls School, which was basically a school for abused adolescent girls. There were a few girls sitting down already as we arrived and one grabbed my attention. She buried herself in her arms and would not look up at anyone and reacted in a negative manner when anyone tried to approach her. I went out of my way to keep "bothering" her until she opened up.

When I began talking to her, she left the room, and I realized this was going to be a harder struggle than I originally thought. Another girl at the school told me that the shy girl's name was Morissa. Morissa stormed off into the hallway and I saw her peeking around the corner at me. I smiled at her and waved and she hid. This became a game until finally she came back in the room.

At the end of the day, Morissa was hanging on me and following me around. She was laughing and seemed at peace, which was an amazing thing to witness as she seemed like a completely different girl than I had met previously.

We went back to Upton a second time, and by then Morissa had jumped out of her shyness. She "escorted" me around and told everyone "Move, Princess Shanna is coming!" and again I saw happiness in her eyes even though it was clear to see that this girl had been hurt a great deal in her past. Later in the day, we were going around in the circle saying a positive thing in our lives, and when we got to Morissa she giggled and replied, "That Shanna is my friend..." This simple statement made my entire trip.

The way I watched Morissa evolve during the time we were at Upton moved me. I think it was clear to see that she just needed someone to care about her, and I truly saw firsthand the power of love. Also, the girls at Upton, especially Morissa, taught me so much about the importance of love in our lives. Their faith in God, despite all that they had been through was extremely powerful and something I will never forget.