

A Society with no Guarantee

The society I have come to know is compiled of absolutes such as attending school, paying taxes, making a living, having a roof to sleep under, a car to drive, and food to eat. Many of these absolutes I have come to take for granted at one time or another. I am guilty of complaining with a groan, a mumble, and an act of refusal when my caterwauling alarm goes off to wake me up for school. Over the past three years of my high school experience, I have been awed and my eyes have been opened to a new type of culture, a new type of society, and a new type of absolute. This type of society, however, comes with no absolutes...other than poverty.

Three years ago, as a freshman, I traveled to Nicaragua to serve a mission trip for a week in February through Project Hope. My family and friends were worried for my safety, telling me stories of a lady who got her finger cut off because someone desperately wanted her ring. I have to admit, I was terrified as the plane hit the bumpy landing strip. I had never been to Nicaragua and yet I already thought I knew what to expect, but I was wrong. The people proved to be more than greedy and violent.

I spent the entire week serving in the following ways: serving watermelon at cancer treatment centers, singing songs, doing arts and crafts with the sick, building three homes, serving food at the dump for the homeless children, and building lifelong relationships. Never once did anything remotely shady or harmful take place. I had never been surrounded by so much poverty, love, and gratitude at the same time. I left my items unattended and never once was I nervous about something being taken. They all had so little but they saw anything, a loaf of bread, as everything. They were ecstatic and overflowed with tears at a new home the size of my kitchen. Children there never complained, mumbled, nor groaned about going to school; rather, they begged to go. Families used nearly all their yearly earnings just to send one child to school. Going to school meant that they had a chance of having a future and for girls, it meant they wouldn't have to sell their bodies for the pleasure of men. My heart ached as a girl my age showed me her bed. She mumbled in her attempted to speak English, "My back has problems. This box spring is hard me-t-al..." She spoke hesitantly as if she was unsure of her pronunciation.

A blood stained, tattered, and torn blanket was her only cover. During violent storms, her dad would wrap her up in a trash bag to keep her covered from the pounding rain. In this society, their absolutes were nothing but dumpster diving, rationing of food, and a box spring for a bed.

I have come to learn that different societies come with a variety of absolutes. I realized I had come to be so wrapped up in my privileged society that I never opened up myself to learn about other societies and diverse cultures. Serving others has brought me hope, a new perspective, and has given me a passion to do my best at everything I do. I have encountered language barriers and have taken action to enroll in a Spanish class, only to advance so rapidly that I was put into advanced placement. I had a passion to learn, to thrive...I wanted to break that barrier.

I have learned that in life that nothing will ever be handed to me. I have to work for what I want and use every opportunity I am handed. I plan to go to college to obtain my master's degree in education, pursue my dreams, and never take any of that for granted. I want to help others break barriers of not knowing and open them up to a world of knowledge. I have gained a passion to make a difference, because one difference can change the world - someone's world. I have gained a passion to be someone others can depend on and rely on because in any society... there is no guarantee.