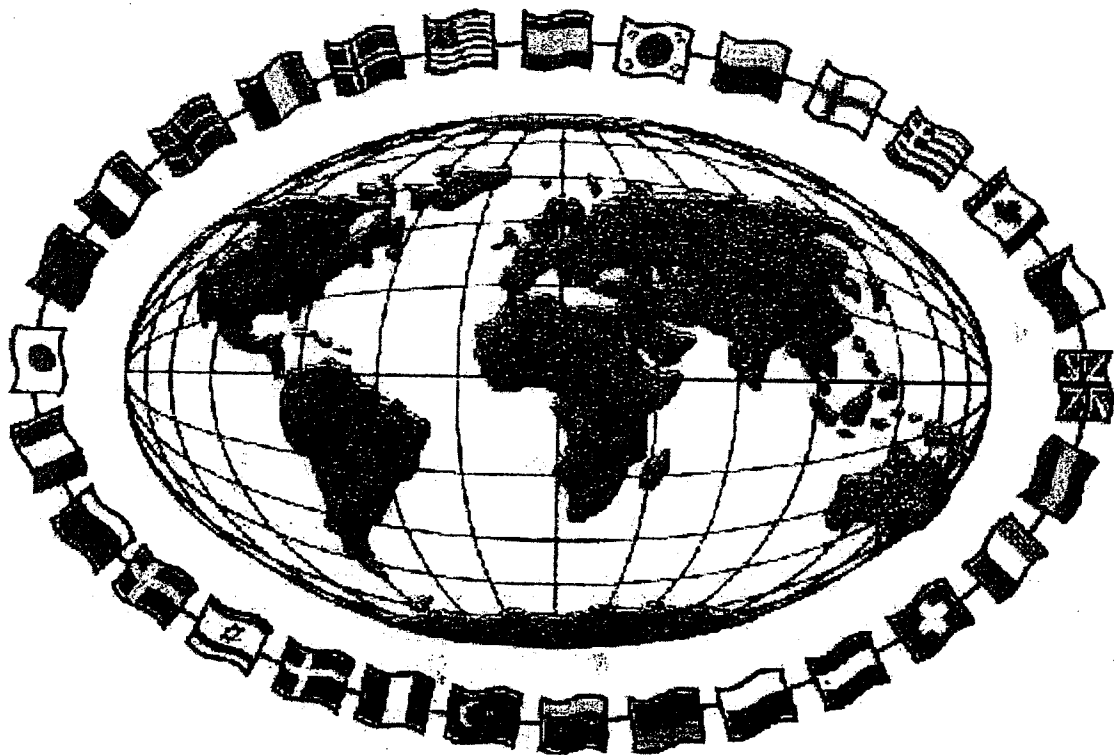


Global Competency Program Portfolio

1





GCP Travel Experience Form

Travel Dates: 4/14 - 4/25/09 Destination(s): France (Paris and Albertville)

Program name or host organization: NHS Trip (Albertville Exchange)

GCP Travel Partner (refer to the GCP Approved Travel Program List at <http://nhs.needham.k12.ma.us/info/global-c/global-comp.htm>)

Yes ☒ (If YES, complete only student and parent signatures) No ☐ (If NO, please complete the entire form and put it in the GCP Review Committee mailbox in the Guidance Office. Applications received by the 15th of the month will be reviewed and returned via the student's homeroom by the last day of the month.)

Student name: [REDACTED] Current grade 12

Student signature: [REDACTED] Date 8/23/09

Homeroom 401 Email [REDACTED]

Parent/guardian name: [REDACTED]

Parent/guardian signature: [REDACTED] Date 9/13/09

Program website: nhs.needham.k12.ma.us/info/07-08/Alb-Interest08.ppt

Program description (mission and objectives): Host a student from Albertville, then stay with them and their family. Also visit Paris and learn about its history and culture. Opportunity to practice French and learn history.
How will you be challenging yourself to connect and interact directly with the culture and the people?

I worked on practicing my French with the people I met and the family I stayed with, without worry of messing up the language. I also tried to leave behind American

Check all that apply to your selected travel program: OF France, in order to learn first hand about its culture.

- ☒ Homestay
- ☐ 30+ hours of community service
- ☒ Cultural study
- ☐ Political study
- ☐ Economic study
- ☒ Historical study
- ☒ Language immersion
- ☐ Pre-departure fundraising
- ☐ Pre-departure program requirements (please list):

If this trip/program is non-international, please explain how you feel it will increase your global awareness: N/A

Program approved for GCP: Yes ☐ No ☐ Date reviewed _____

GCP Review Committee Member signature _____



GCP Travel Experience Form

Travel Dates: 7/3 - 8/3/09 Destination(s): Southern Africa (South Africa, Swaziland)

Program name or host organization: Windsor Mountain International and Lesotho

GCP Travel Partner (refer to the GCP Approved Travel Program List at <http://nhs.needham.k12.ma.us/info/global-c/global-comp.htm>)

Yes ☒ (If YES, complete only student and parent signatures) No ☐ (If NO, please complete the entire form and put it in the GCP Review Committee mailbox in the Guidance Office. Applications received by the 15th of the month will be reviewed and returned via the student's homeroom by the last day of the month.)

Student name [REDACTED] Current grade 12

Student signature [REDACTED] Date 8/25/09

Homeroom 401 Email [REDACTED]

Parent/guardian name [REDACTED]

Parent/guardian signature [REDACTED] Date 9/13/09

Program website: www.windsormountain.org

Program description (mission and objectives): "creating learning experiences

that use the world as a classroom. Our goal is to help

students discover the skills they need to carry their personal missions

How will you be challenging yourself to connect and interact directly with the Forward as the
culture and the people? become responsible global citizens!

I became very interested in the lives of people we

met, so I showed my intrigue and had engaging

conversations. I also tried to experience everything to understand

Check all that apply to your selected travel program: their culture to the best of
my ability.

- ☒ Homestay
- ☒ 30+ hours of community service
- ☒ Cultural study
- ☒ Political study
- ☒ Economic study
- ☒ Historical study
- ☒ Language immersion
- ☒ Pre-departure fundraising
- ☐ Pre-departure program requirements (please list):

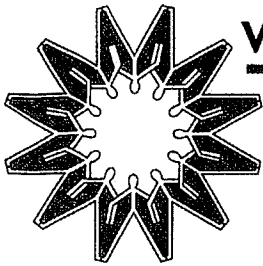
If this trip/program is non-international, please explain how you feel it will increase your global awareness: N/A

Program approved for GCP: Yes ☐ No ☐ Date reviewed _____

GCP Review Committee Member signature _____

<http://nhs.needham.k12.ma.us/info/global-c/global-comp.htm>

GCP Travel Experience Form 3/29/08



WINDSOR MOUNTAIN INTERNATIONAL

Bringing Worlds Together since 1961

COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING ~ LEADERSHIP ~ ENVIRONMENT & ADVENTURE
LANGUAGE LEARNING ~ PERFORMING ARTS ~ INTERNATIONAL SUMMER CAMP

Service Hours Completed by: [REDACTED]

Bridge Southern Africa 2009

This document verifies service hours completed by the student participating in the Windsor Mountain International program listed above during the summer of 2009. If you have questions regarding the type or service or the extent of the hours, please do not hesitate to call.

Organization Served	Location	Date	Hours
Klerksdorp Hospital HIV/AIDS Orphans	Klerksdorp, South Africa	July 6, 2009	1.5
Umbuyisa School of Art	Soweto, South Africa	July 8 – July 10, 2009	14
SOS Children's Home	Mbabane, Swaziland	July 12 – July 14, 2009	16
Malealea Land Trust (road building)	Malealea, Lesotho	July 19 – July 22, 2009	16
Arayan Benevolent Home (activities with the residents)	Durban, South Africa	July 24 – July 26, 2009	8
Amopondo Backpackers (gardening and activities with local children)	Port Saint Johns, South Africa	July 27, 2009	4
Kraal Backpackers (grounds cleaning)	Kraal, South Africa	July 28, 2009	2
Kurland Township (day camp for local children)	The Craggs, South Africa	July 29, 2009	4

Total Hours: 65.5

Program Leaders: Sarah Foster and Thatcher Glode

Program Director: Angus Whyte

One World Way, Windsor, New Hampshire 03244 ~ Telephone: 800-862-7760

FAX: 603-478-5260 ~ mail@WindsorMountain.org ~ www.WindsorMountain.org



GCP Global Service Form

Student name [REDACTED] Date 9/13/09
Student email [REDACTED]
Homeroom teacher Mrs. Sugameli

Name of organization/travel service program Windsor Mountain Student Travel
Supervisor's name Angus Whyte Phone (409) 549-9197
Supervisor's email angus@windsorMountain.org
Beginning and ending dates 7/3/09 - 8/3/09 Total hours 65.5 service hours

Project description: Bridge Southern Africa 2009 was a 2 month travel program for teens that focused on leadership service projects, cultural exchange, and HIV/AIDS awareness in South Africa, Swaziland, and Lesotho. See attached for service project details.
Cultural and foreign language exposure: Cultural: SOS Red Cross Children's Village, Makena Trust, Umlazi School of Art
Language: isiXhosa, isiNdebele, Sotho, various dialects

Supervisor's signature (upon completion of project) Angus Whyte

If this project is not in conjunction with a pre-approved GCP Global Service Partner or a GCP approved travel/service program (refer to the GCP Global Service Partners List and the GCP Approved Travel Programs List at <http://nhs.needham.k12.ma.us/info/global-c/global-comp.htm>), then this proposal must be submitted to the GCP Review Committee for approval, prior to the start of the community service project. Please put this form in the GCP Review Committee mailbox in the Guidance Office. Applications received by the 15th of the month will be reviewed and returned via the student's homeroom by the last day of the month.

Program approved for GCP: YES ☐ NO ☐ Date reviewed _____
GCP Review Committee Member signature _____

PLEASE NOTE: a Community Classroom Student Proposal Form must be completed and approved as well, in order to earn Community Classroom credit for this project. These forms are available on the Community Classroom website: http://fcw.needham.k12.ma.us/%7Egretchen_ayoub/index

<http://nhs.needham.k12.ma.us/info/global-c/global-comp.htm>



GCP Global Focus Project Form

Student Name: [REDACTED]

Student Email: [REDACTED]

Country/Region of Focus: France - Lyon + Savoie

Activity #1

Activity: Purchase French cookbook in Lyon and translate with French
Date completed: 4/23/09 exchange student

Activity #2

Activity: Cook traditional Lyonnaise meal with exchange student on 1
Date completed: 8/16/09 return visit

Activity #3

Activity: Read various books about French cuisine
Date completed: 8/30/09

Essay Topic: Food and cooking

In a double-spaced, 3-4 page essay, discuss what motivated you to pursue your area of focus, describe the ways in which the project's activities have widened your cultural understanding, and predict how you may apply what you have learned to your future endeavors. Attach the essay to this form.

Focus Project Essay

Food is a universal entity that people across the globe require in order to survive. The ways in which it is prepared and eaten vary greatly reflecting the culture and geographic location of the people consuming the food. I was interested in exploring these differences in food practices but also the similarities that would connect our culture to others'. Not to mention, this is a very tasty topic to indulge in. I first noticed the culture of French cuisine while in France, where I brought a cookbook in Lyon that was written in French. I then brought the culture back to the States, translating the cookbook and cooking a meal with my French exchange student who visited me again on a return trip. I ended my studies by reading various books on French Cuisine including, *Julia and Jacques Cooking at Home*, *Madeleine Kamman's Savoie* and *Pierre Franey's Cooking in France* (the research collected is dispersed throughout this essay).

While my French exchange student, Flora, was staying with us I noticed what a big appetite she had, as she would ask for four frozen "Eggo" waffles for breakfast with yogurt and two sandwiches for lunch, more yogurt and snacks. While I can not understand her fixation on "Eggo" waffles when they have such amazing pastries in France, I came to learn and understand her big lunches because, as she told me, in France the main meal of the day is lunch, not dinner. In my research I found out that in France, or at least in the Savoie where Flora is from, the farmers would consume coffee and bread at 5 AM, then milk the cows and eat a real breakfast at 9AM of soup, bacon, fresh cheese and bread. At noon they would enjoy the major meal of the day with starchy vegetables, polenta, or pasta. A little snack of a bowl of milk, cake or cookies for children and coffee, bread and cheese for adults would be had at 4 PM. In the late afternoon the cows would be milked again and cheese made, so a light dinner would not be eaten until 8 PM and would include soup and leftovers from lunch (Kamman). In modern times these

practices seem obsolete, but the routine of a big lunch, a light dinner, and minimal snacks has stuck.

When I was in France I noticed this eating pattern first hand. On my first day with my host family, we had coffee and cake for breakfast. Then we went to a cafeteria style lunch at the base of the mountains. Here I expected to see sandwiches and a salad bar but was surprised to see full Rotisserie chickens and mashed potatoes, spaghetti and meatballs and a huge buffet of desserts. We travelled into the mountains and went sledding so by the time we came home it was already five o'clock. Flora's mom then began preparing crêpes. I assumed that this would be dinner so I kept eating the delicious creations with "Nutella" and Flora's mother's homemade jam as she continuously served me more. I was completely full by six o'clock so I was shocked to hear them ask what I would like for dinner. I tried to explain that whatever they were eating would be fine for me. They said they would make me a hamburger, so I was puzzled why I was the only one eating a hamburger at the dinner table around 8:30. I also had a full plate of steamed mushrooms rather than just as a side dish. Flora and her family were only eating salad and I realized they had cooked me extra because I am an American, and as Flora explained, Americans eat a lot. Before we came on our trip one of the teachers accompanying us explained that it is rude to leave extra food on your plate, so I ate that entire plate of mushrooms, hamburger and salad! Afterwards they fed me yogurt and cheese which is a common after dinner dessert in France. Flora later told me she was shocked at how much I ate and looking back at that experience all we can do is laugh!

Throughout my week long stay, Flora introduced me to some French culture through various meal experiences just as we tried to do when she was in America. Her mother would pack me two sandwiches, a large bottle of drinkable yogurt and a multitude of snacks. One night we went to the mountain chalet of a French girl involved in the exchange. We ate traditional

French “mac and cheese” made with square pasta, brie cheese and ham. A plate of cold cut meats was also passed around. It was fascinating to see how far each of the French students live from one another, so as we ventured to another student’s house the next night, we were forced to carpool and walk. At this girl’s house we dined on traditional raclette, which is a classic Swiss dish. There is a lot of Swiss influence in their town Albertville, because it is only separated from Switzerland by the Alps. For this meal, one places a piece of cheese on a tray, then puts this tray in a miniature, oven-like fixture which is on the center of the dining table. Once the cheese is melted and bubbly, it is poured over potatoes, pickles and various meats on one’s plate. This meal, as well as fondue, is very popular due to the region’s abundance of cheese (Frane). Leaving France with a full stomach, I headed back to the States hoping to replicate some of the meals I had learned.

In August, Flora decided to join us at our summer house on Cape Cod. I was determined to cook a traditional meal with her for our family and friends. While in France I had bought a cook book in Lyon. Lyon is the “most admired restaurant city in France” (Frane 207) and a hub of cuisine for the whole world. This is due to the fact that it has been an “international crossroads” where “merchants and warriors have been passing through for more than 2,000 years, sometimes stopping for a while, bearing with them their ideas, their wares, their foods,” (208). It is good that I had Flora because the book I had bought, *La Bonne Cuisine Lyonnaise*, (Good Lyonnaise Cooking) was written fully in French! As we were looking through the cookbook, she kept commenting that we could not make certain dishes because the ingredients are not available in the United States. These food items were mainly meats like livers and intestines which may be found in specialty stores, but not in our regular supermarkets. In France there are specialty stores for everything, *patisserie* for breads and pastries, *poissonerie* for fish, *boucherie* for meats etc. We were left with minimal options and we decided to make *Rissoles du*

Bugey which has no English translation but was basically diced chicken baked in puff pastry dough.

Throughout the entire meal, I had a very difficult time because everything was in French and Flora had the power to figure out what we needed for the meal, amounts of food (it was written in grams) and time of cooking. I really enjoy cooking and creating meals, but on this occasion it was tough for me to give up all of my control and power in the kitchen. I was nervous at first because Flora seemed to be unsure about her cooking abilities and I wasn't much help in understanding the recipe, but in the end I was able to learn from her translations and laid back cooking style. She said this was a traditional Lyonnaise dish but not Savoie (the region she is from) so she had never made it before. It surprised me how cuisine could vary from her home in Albertville to the town Lyon, a mere two hours away. We first diced A LOT of chicken which in the end was way too much but I was unable to share my opinions previous to making the meal because I was unaware where in the meal all the chicken would be going and how it would be cooked. We then sautéed it and added a sauce of vinegar, egg yolks, and raisins. She said it wasn't thick enough so we improvised adding cream and taking sauce out. We put this mixture into multiple quarters of puff pastry sheets, which she was surprised to see Americans have in our markets. Then I rolled them up as Flora had demonstrated and glazed them with egg yolks. We put them in the oven but were unsure of the time or temperature because the book said 25 to 30 minutes at "th. 7" of which we don't have an equivalent. We kept checking on them, until they were lightly browned and in the end they were perfect. Flora also made her delicious shallot vinaigrette. Salad is very popular at dinnertime in France and Flora said that will be all she will eat when she is at college next year. For dessert we settled on making something I had tried in France, *Île Flottante* which translates to "Floating Island". It is whipped egg whites floating in sweet custard and drizzled with caramel. The recipe called for *crème anglaise* which

we could not find in the supermarket nor knew how to make. Flora used more improvisation mixing egg yolks with condensed milk. I asked her if it was bad to be eating raw egg yolks and she looked at me with a questioning look and asked, "Why?". I read in the book *Julia and Jacques Cooking at Home* that eating raw eggs is very common in France, but recent Salmonella scares have averted Americans from eating them. The entire meal received rave reviews and I enjoyed cooking it with Flora.

Through my research and experiences with French food I have come to understand some fundamental differences between French and American cooking that America would do well learning from. First, French food uses less fat in meals and less sugar in desserts. They also love eating salads and vegetables, and keep them very natural in order to appreciate the flavors, instead of masking them. This is simply a healthier way of living that could reduce obesity in the U.S. The preparation of French food is also very time consuming. It is prepared in a way that allows all the flavors of the food to meld together and enrich one another. This concept of taking your time is one that here in America we often forget. I think we, as Americans, can learn from the French cuisine and lifestyle to slow down and enjoy life instead of rushing through everything. The meals in France are also plated very simply but are not necessarily simple to create, another thing that we would do well to listen to. If we kept things simple yet full of thought, life and problems that arise could go more smoothly. Despite these differences, and the differences in cuisine world-wide, the main similarity is that food and meals bring people together. It is a straightforward concept with endless beneficial results. Whether bringing families and friends together for weddings, and birthday celebrations or somber funerals or just watching movies with cartons of greasy Chinese food, food is always there and stays a binding force. It is important that we set aside time with the people important to us to have meaningful conversations and interactions with one another while cooking, eating and enjoying food.

Works Cited

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Child, Julia, Jacques Pepin, and David Nussbaum. *Julia and Jacques Cooking at Home*. New

York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1999. Print.

Franey, Pierre, and Richard Flaste. *Pierre Franey's Cooking in France*. New York: Alfred A.

Knopf Inc., 1994. Print.

Kamman, Madeleine. *Madeleine Kamman's Savoie*. New York: Atheneum, 1989. Print.



Global Competence Program Résumé



I. International Travel Experience

Windsor Mountain International; www.windsormountain.org; South Africa, Swaziland and Lesotho; July 3- August 3, 2009

- **Program's mission:** learning experiences using the world as a classroom; help students discover skills they need to carry their personal missions forward as they become responsible global citizens; bring people together in spirit of fun, education and building a peaceful community; for students to gain a global perspective on complex ecological, social, economic and other cultural issues facing local communities, and discover the skills they need to carry their personal missions forward and to affect their own communities in meaningful and enduring ways; experiential learning; community service learning; leadership development; intercultural friendship exchange, personal responsibility; respect; cultural and environmental awareness
- **Program's focus:** learning and understanding of the affects of the Apartheid, poverty and the HIV/AIDs pandemic; teach and play with children; work with local community members on projects to better their community
- **Major personal achievements:** breaking out of my comfort zone by going on a trip so far from home; working with a group of students from all over the country and becoming a family-like unit; stepping into a completely different culture and adapting and thriving in it; overcoming anxieties; taking each experience as it comes and undergoing it to my full potential; learning more about myself and what I want to do in life

Albertville Exchange (Needham High School Trip); nhs.needham.k12.ma.us; France (Paris and Albertville region); April 14- April 25, 2009

- **Program's mission:** create ties with students and families in France
- **Program's focus:** practice French language skills, learn history and culture of different regions in France
- **Major personal achievements:** practicing my French with more confidence; living with a family who speaks a different language; building ties and bonds with this family and student (who even visited me once the exchange was over)

II. Community Service

Klerksdorp Hospital HIV/AIDS Orphans

- **Responsibilities:** interact and play with children at preschool
- **Skills used:** coming up with ways to entertain kids
- **Skills acquired:** ability to communicate with children who speak little English; how to be thrown into situations for short periods of time but still be helpful

Umbuyisa School of Art and Culture

- **Responsibilities:** supervise children's art projects; play and lead activities with kids
- **Skills used:** helping but not taking over kids' work; creativity; coming up with activities
- **Skills acquired:** patience; new games to teach to kids; ways to interact with children

SOS Children's Home

- **Responsibilities:** teach classes; lead games and activities with children
- **Skills used:** coming up with interesting ways to teach; creating games
- **Skills acquired:** teaching strategies; patience; ways to interact with kids; games to play

Malealea Land Trust

- **Responsibilities:** rebuilding a road
- **Skills used:** pick-axing; digging; wheel-barrowing; interacting with community members
- **Skills acquired:** manual labor; interacting with locals who speak no English

Arayan Benevolent Home

- **Responsibilities:** lead activities and play with kids
- **Skills used:** coming up with activities; creativity
- **Skills acquired:** patience; ways to interact with children

Amopondo Backpackers

- **Responsibilities:** irrigate garden; play with kids at preschool
- **Skills used:** staking posts with leveling tool; entertaining kids for a brief period of time
- **Skills acquired:** how to use a handmade leveling tool; ways to interact with children; how to be thrown into situations for short periods of time but still be helpful

Kraal Backpackers

- **Responsibilities:** grounds cleaning for house rebuilding
- **Skills used:** lifting materials
- **Skills acquired:** manual labor; how to be thrown into situations for short periods of time but still be helpful

Kurland Township

- **Responsibilities:** lead field day at day camp for children
- **Skills used:** coordinating games for kids and then leading these activities
- **Skills acquired:** ability to run activities and teach them to kids without English; ways to interact with children; how to be thrown into situations for short periods of time but still be helpful

III. Academic

A. Foreign Language Study

- French: 6 years (through level 4)

B. Other Global Academic Studies

- World History: Study of European and non-Western societies and cultures from the Middle ages through the nineteenth century
- World and American History: Study of the World and America from the Age of Revolution until present day with focus on Imperialism, World Wars and the rise of communism

IV. Extra-Curricular

A. Purchase French cookbook in Lyon and translate with French exchange student

B. Cook a traditional Lyonnaise meal from the French cookbook with exchange student on her return visit

C. Read various books about French Cuisine

Reflective Essay

For my Global Competence experience, I embarked on two equally unforgettable but polar opposite journeys. The first obstacle I had to face before embarking on either trip was my anxieties about leaving home. Although I have been travelling since I was little, I was always with my family. I knew that if I wanted to get the most out of these experiences I would need to leave my comfort zone, therefore leaving my family at home as I explored the world.

In October 2008, the French Exchange trip began, as 25 French students stayed here in Needham with 25 American families. It was my first time meeting Flora, and immediately we had similarities, whether it was our love of dance, big appetites or hunger for travel. Their two week stay went by rapidly, as we attempted to introduce them to “American things” including Halloween, pumpkin carving, hamburgers, big malls, Cape Cod, and the presidential elections (they loved Obama). Flora also explained her perceptions of Americans having everything BIG and we tried to change her ideas and make them more realistic. As I took Flora to Logan Airport, we had a teary goodbye but we knew we would be seeing each other soon enough. The five and a half months flew by, and before we knew it we were arriving in Paris. Exploring this magnificent city was incredible. My roommates and I loved bonding in little cafés, elegant boutiques, and strolling through the Palace of Versailles. After three days we were off to Albertville on the high speed train, TGV, to reconnect with our French correspondents. Flora, her mother, her father, and little brother, Matisse, were anxiously awaiting my arrival at the station. They took me into the Alps to “luge” (sled), served me traditional French raclette and brought me motor-scootering and motorcycling through the villages and mountains. During the days with our American group we visited Lyon’s ancient city, Chambéry, Annecy’s majestic lake and the United Nations in Geneva. Now it was our turn to leave and as we departed at 5:30

A.M., I wondered if I would ever see Flora again. As we kept in touch she kept mentioning how she would like to come back to the States, and so on August 12, 2009 Flora came to stay with us on Cape Cod. As a trip not affiliated with the school's exchange, we knew that we had a real friendship and connection. Now I have no doubts we will be seeing each other again.

My trip to South Africa is even more difficult to put into a concise paragraph, as I could write a whole novel about my experiences. Early in 2008 I got it into my head that I wanted to do a trip unlike any other I had gone on before. I felt that a trip to Africa would be just this, but I didn't realize what an impact it would really make on me. I spent months researching, then months fundraising, then months getting prepared and when the early day in July came for me to leave; I could not believe it had finally come. Most of us met up at JFK, and then the whole group of 11 students from around the country plus one girl from Spain were connected in Johannesburg with our two experienced leaders. Over the next four and a half weeks we became a family cooking, travelling and adventuring together. We were given jobs everyday including leader, journalist (although I journaled in my own personal journal everyday), vanigator (mapped out the day's route), inspirationalist, and cooking team. This taught us to take responsibility of our own actions and see how they affect the group. We ended every night with ED (evening discussion) where we were able to talk about and reflect on the day seeing how the experiences shaped everyone differently.

The group dynamics and organization was figured out in our first few days of orientation in Johannesburg. We visited the Apartheid museum which had powerful exhibits on the brutal Apartheid rule. Our first encounter with children was in Klerksdorp at the Khaya Thsepo preschool for children who had lost parents due to HIV/AIDS. I could not believe the spirit these kids had after all they had been through at such a young age. We saw this spirit throughout the

trip at the numerous children's homes we went to. After that, we visited the preschool's corresponding hospice and hospital. There I learned the concept of "Ubuntu" in terms of the community helping each other get medical care for HIV/AIDS. This is the idea that a person is a person through other people, and one must work for the community by helping each other. Western society is less based on community and more focused on individualism, so I want to break this social norm and incorporate Ubuntu into my life here in the States. I have begun to accomplish this goal as a friend and I am starting a club at the High School based on working together to help the communities that we visited in Southern Africa.

We then travelled to the Soweto Township where we worked with local artists who volunteer their time to a local afterschool. This afterschool is called the Umbuyisa School of Art and Culture, but it is not what we in the privileged town of Needham would think of as an art school. It had about one sheet of paper for each kid and less than enough pencils, but the important part was that it continues to be a safe place for kids to gather day after day. Our next stop was the landlocked country, Swaziland. I had the incredible opportunity there to teach a class of 47 2nd graders. I could not believe that classes were so big and apparently this was a "small" class. The students were not able to get the individualized attention they deserved making them struggle to understand even the simplest concepts. Another culture shock was when the teacher hit their hands with a stick for misbehaving. I personally believe that this is no way to encourage learning but I also had to realize that this was part of their culture. Many of the students at this school were orphans from the SOS Children's home right next door. We played with these kids in the afternoon for a few days. I met a second grader named Njabu who had a smile to light up anyone's day. I felt so pained to know that she was orphaned, but her happiness was inspiring. The only time I saw her sad was as we were leaving, she wouldn't let

go of me and as we pulled out of the parking lot her eyes welled up with tears. I could not believe I had affected someone so much, but on the other hand she had affected me equally. I was really sad when I realize that I would most likely never see her again.

We stopped back in South Africa for a few days then were off to the country Lesotho where we lodged in traditional rondovals with limited electricity. Here we worked on building roads in Malealea with the Malealea Trust. I was surprised to find out that we had to pay money to volunteer with them. This is because there are few Africans who have money to donate to local organizations so there is very little money. We worked with local community members who were working on the road, simply because it was the road to their village and it was destroyed by flood waters. As we pick axed a hill to make our own gravel, I couldn't believe I was lucky enough to be experiencing this. Using a man who spoke the local language and English I got the chance to sit down with local women and discuss their lives. I was really moved when I talked to a 70 year old woman who has been married since she was 15! They don't get divorced in this village and the chief (who I was fortunate enough to meet) solves all of their problems. I was really inspired to hear this showing me that there is hope to find lasting meaningful relationships. Our journey led us next back to South Africa where we stopped in Kestell then travelled along the Wild Coast going through Durban, Port St. Johns, Mpande, The Craggs and George until we reached Cape Town. We stopped along the way for multiple service projects in a township, a preschool and the Aryan Benevolent Home. After wrap-up activities in Cape Town we were headed back to the United States on a 17 hour plane ride.

What I experienced in the four and a half weeks was more than many people experience in a lifetime. Coming home was so bizarre because life was the exact same here, yet I was so different. I still am unaware of all the affects this trip has had on me because they are too

plentiful and some too profound. But I do know that it has changed my perspective on everything. I can see more clearly that the people and experiences you have in life are more important than any material possession. The people I met on this trip have helped me realize that living in the moment and happiness it brings is the best way to live, enjoy and appreciate life. I have also come to understand that everything you go through shapes you in some way, whether good or bad and you must accept that in order to grow. I am so proud of myself for embarking on this journey which is just a piece of my lifelong journey but has been a catalyst in my journey of self discovery.