

Playing on Broken Glass

During Spring Break while college students from across the U.S. head to the beaches for unbridled partying, two teams of students from Patrick Henry College set off to share the love of Christ in tangible ways with people in need. One team, led by Clayton Millhouse a senior from Virginia, traveled to Honduras where they worked with local ministries to provide medical clinics in remote areas. Their team spent time each day sharing Christ with the Hondurans who came to the clinics and with those that they worked alongside on the construction site for a new school.

I had the privilege of leading a team to Greece where we partnered with local Greek ministries who are engaged with the 10,000+ refugees in Athens. Our work involved projects in both Syrian and Afghani refugee camps as well as ministries that offer medical care, clothing and English language classes specifically to refugee women and their children

Over the course of the week I saw our students serve tirelessly in settings that ranged from classrooms to Syrian squatter settlements in abandoned buildings to an Afghani Refugee Camp at an old abandoned airport. The conditions of the places where we served were often dire yet our students served with both joy and hope. Sweeping broken glass and debris aside, we would gather children for games, stories, songs and a Greek version of *Hokie Pokie* that would have to be seen to be believed!

At the end of one particularly challenging day of serving, one of the men from the Afghani camp came up to me and said, "Thank you for letting me see my children laugh again". The joy of seeing children playing, laughing and forgetting if for a few minutes was worth it all.

Each night after a very late dinner, we would gather to debrief and pray for the people we had met that day. I saw our students' lives changed over the week as statistics took on human form, each with a story. Stories of what they left behind, but more importantly stories of hope for a better life for their families.

God used this experience to plow deeply into our students' hearts. Below are reflections from three of our team members.

"There is a lie which claims that brokenness and suffering can steal hope, and that circumstances of pain can erase both memories and dreams of a hope-filled life. At first glance, it makes sense. Abandoned children, abused widows, and forgotten communities...surely this is not where hope would flourish. And yet, it is a hope so beautiful and rich that I observed in the smiles of the children, the eyes of the women, and the heart of the refugee community. Their stories served as powerful reminders that hope is not found in comfort, security, opportunity or any other treasure of this

world. I pray that the faces imprinted upon my heart this week will forever remind me of this truth.

*~So we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal “~
Julianne Owens, Greece 2017*

“The weight of what can't be unseen and unheard is what sits with me today as I reflect on my time working with Afghani and Syrian refugees in Greece. Words, pictures, videos... none of them suffice in telling the stories that have ripped through my heart, popping the bubble of the "world" in which I live and know. But there is another "world" that others experience... violent, oppressive, traumatic. I still have much to process and wrestle with in my own heart because I feel changed... but for now, I'm thankful for life. I'm thankful for freedom. And I'm thankful for the hope that we have in Christ - a hope that assures us that He will never leave us nor forsake us... and that He joins with those in their deepest suffering.” - Bethany Anderson, Greece 2017

“Father, change us to see the world through Your eyes. To see Your face in the face of these beautiful children. Change us as we listen to the parents' stories of what they have come from. Change us as we hand out food and clothes and as we share the Gospel as the only hope that any of us have. Break our heart for what matters most to Your Kingdom...” - Jack Haye, Greece 2017

Our mission at Patrick Henry College is to prepare the next generation of Christian leaders who will faithfully lead in their homes, their communities, in the marketplace, in prominent positions of public service on both state and national stages. Leaders who understand that we are to live on mission; to be active participants in God's story of redemption all around us – at the grocery, at the office, at church, on Capital Hill, in Greece and Honduras as well as in our hometown.

We have a clear calling to stand in the gap for the sake of the Gospel. With God's help we are committed to remain steadfast in our calling. Thank you for being a part of this journey!

In His Service,
Jack