

Far Rockaway Final Project: Essay

By Hannah Malter

My experience going to Far Rockaway with JTeen was incredible. I can honestly say that I enjoyed every minute of it. This is my first year being involved with anything related to JTeen and Rockaway was my first real overnight trip. I was hesitant and nervous at first but now I can only look back on the trip and feel a sense of happiness and accomplishment.

In less than two days we were able to get so much done. From helping recover homes with Friends of Rockaway, to preparing food at Masbia and everything else in between, it was not only fun, but also rewarding. For me, knowing that I was working on a house that children have grown up in and that one day hopefully other children will as well, made it so much more meaningful. We all put so much dedication into making sure everything was our best work and our best effort. As for JCCRP and the West End Temple, it was so nice knowing that we were able to donate needed supplies after hearing their stories of everything they have endured. Masbia also has an incredible story. The things that they do everyday for people, is unbelievable.

During the trip, I remember hearing so many different stories. In ways, they were alike. Each one faced the same exact storm and each one had damage done just simply on different levels. But the really beautiful thing that we got to see was how this community worked together. They went through such a hard time together and they are working to stand back up together. Seeing this really had an impact on me and made me feel so lucky and grateful for all that I have.

After having been on that service trip, I realize that we can't take things for granted. One day everything we worked for and have now could be gone. I have also learned that as community we need to work together and I think the JTeen organization is a great example of bringing the community together. So if one day we get hit as hard as the Rockaway's did, we would everything we need to start getting back up.

Overall, I thought the Far Rockaway service trip was amazing. I have seen and learned so much as well as made new friends along the way. I cannot wait to hopefully go back there again and see the progress that community has made.