

Amanda Albert

The service trip to Oklahoma City was extremely meaningful and impactful to me. We did so many things that I will never forget. My favorite activity was building and painting the two houses with Habitat for Humanity. The first house had been destroyed in a tornado and the other was destroyed from another cause that was not specified. This impacted me because it made me realize how fortunate I am to live in a safer area where I do not have to worry whether or not my house has a tornado shelter. The owner of the first house spoke to us about her experience. It was so meaningful because she was so appreciative that we were there helping her and she was so happy to have us. We also stopped at one of the elementary schools that was torn down by the same tornado. It was heartbreaking to see because I could never imagine something like that happening where I live. It felt great to be helping in this manner and was very enjoyable too.

We also went to a Black Baptist Church. Going to church was so cool because experienced other peoples' religion. We were able to compare and contrast Judaism to Baptism. The people in the church were also so welcoming and happy to see us there. Going to church for a day was also fun and I liked seeing how their traditions are similar and different to mine.

On the last day we visited the Jesus House. Jesus House helps homeless people try to go back to stability. When we first got there we went to the food area. We helped pack boxes of specific foods for the people staying in the house. We packed the boxes and they came to pick them up. While they were waiting outside, we went to talk to some of the people living in the house. They were all so grateful to see us there helping. They told us that they wish they had done things like us when they were our age instead of making bad decisions. We also took a tour of the dorms that the people live in. It was so sad and made me realize how fortunate I am to be living a better lifestyle than those of the people living in the Jesus House.

One of the days, we visited the Oklahoma Bombing Museum. Before we toured the museum, a woman spoke to us; she lost her dad when the building was bombed. Hearing her story made me realize how lucky I am to have my parents. I can't imagine if what happened to her ever happened to me. Looking around the museum was both sad and cool. For example, there were cases of mugs, glasses, briefcases, shoes and other items that were left over from the bombing. The saddest room in the museum was the

one that had pictures of all the people who died in the bombing that day. It broke my heart to see all the people's faces, especially the babies that were in day care the day of the bombing. Outside the museum there was one chair to represent every empty seat at the dinner table for all the people who died that day; there were shorter chairs to represent the little kids. It was so sad to see the amount of chairs outside. 168 people died that day - 19 of them were children.

Overall, I took so much out of this service trip. I learned many new things about cultures and the history of Oklahoma City as well as being able to help others. Although I went on the trip with two of my camp friends, I was able to meet so many other people my age who have similar interests as me. Going on this trip was so meaningful because I had the satisfaction of assisting others and it was very educational as well.