



FORDHAM UNIVERSITY | NEW YORK, NEW YORK
GLOBAL OUTREACH | STANDUP FOR KIDS – SAN DIEGO
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- REFLECTIONS -



2003 “GO Team” speaks about their week of service to a local San Diego youth group!

There are no words to describe this experience other than to say that I now look at everything completely different. The kids have blown me away with our insane similarities and differences. The line between college kid and street kid blurred to the point of us all being just kids. The relationship is so unique though because we have so much to offer each other. They are as fascinated with our lives as we are with theirs, which makes for not only very interesting discussions but a very balanced friendship. I have learned that it is still possible to love through hardship and pain and that a biological family is not the only kind. I have learned to look past a person’s first impression and that the most unlikely suspects sometimes hold the greatest gifts. I have learned to appreciate my support system and my basic luck and my pillow. I have learned most of all though that the freedom that comes with living on the streets carries a high price and that sometimes the littlest things make the biggest difference.

- ANONYMOUS

At first, I was not sure how much this experience would change me. However, after working with STANDUP FOR KIDS, I can say I will never be the same again. The training that the instructors give each of the volunteers is amazing. They are not afraid to answer any questions and address all topics to the fullest. The kids that we met through the center and through outreach were the kindest people I have ever encountered with such a great perspective on life. Writing this reflection makes me terribly sad, to know that I have to leave San Diego tomorrow, however I hope to get involved with STANDUP FOR KIDS - New York City. If anyone is thinking about volunteering or visiting STANDUP FOR KIDS, I would say that the experience is life-altering and one has to do it! Now I look at so many different issues facing homeless and at-risk youth, such as education, abuse, and society, in a completely different light. Finally I want to thank everyone at STANDUP FOR KIDS for providing me with great experiences that I will carry throughout my entire life.

- NICHOLE

I'm finding it hard to find the words to properly express how incredibly grateful I am for this opportunity to work with STANDUP FOR KIDS a second time! My time spent here is definitely unlike other volunteer experiences I have encountered in my life. It is truly unique in so many various aspects; from the amazing counselors to the inspirational street kids I have been honored to meet. This experience is so special because it is based on the strengthening of those interpersonal relationships with each other that all need in order to survive.

I see so much in each street kid I've met over this last week. In 10 days, I have been touched, inspired, motivated, and captivated by each conversation, smile, and image I've encountered. As difficult as it is to come in direct contact with the sad conditions our children are forced to live with, I wouldn't exchange my time here for the world. The realizations of the need for change will be channeled with me everywhere I go and to every person I come in contact with. These kids have taught me what it means to be genuinely strong, and I owe it to them and myself to never forget the lessons I've learned and apply them to my life constantly.

- MEGHAN

Because of my week with STANDUP FOR KIDS, I will never be able to look at a homeless person or a street kid the same way again. My perspective has completely changed, because through education and first-hand experience, I learned that street kids are still kids with a heart and soul and typically, the victims of circumstances that no human being should have to suffer. We as a nation must claim responsibility to assist them and help them grow into the positive and conscientious people they want to become.

Thank you STANDUP FOR KIDS for teaching me such a critical lesson!

- ANONYMOUS

What does one say to a weepy eighteen year-old, pregnant with her first child, who explained that she lived on the streets since her step-dad kicked her out at 16? Or to a teen who dreams of joining the Navy in spite of her having left school after the eighth grade, when her father kicked her out for refusing to sleep with him?? What can one do for the 1.3 million children, whose experiences have left them with no other option than to sleep under bridges, selling themselves and drugs for money to eat, or stealing and selling those things to survive? Certainly one cannot say “Get a job!” or “Go Home!” Roughly half of these kids are not old enough legally to work, and given the situations at home, having most often been horrific enough to convince them to leave, certainly would not offer a promising respite.

So what can one say? Rick and the volunteer staff of STANDUP FOR KIDS lend the answer: “I’m here.” Over the past week as a STANDUP FOR KIDS intern, I’ve learned how to say, “I’m here” to these kids. My incredible teammates and I said “we’re here” by cleaning the center where the kids come to eat and bathe. We said “we’re here” by talking to them, demonstrating our compassion for them by listening and sharing. We said “we’re here” by spending 24 hours on the streets with them, that when it came time to help out or lend advice to these kids we would do so with empathy.

- ANONYMOUS



STANDUP FOR KIDS is an excellent organization that goes that extra step. They don’t just clothe and hand out food to the kids, they take the time to actually listen to and to get to know and help every individual kid! They allow their volunteers to see what it may be really like to be a street kid so they can really know and understand the trials and tribulations the street kids endure. Through both extensive training and intense personal experience, STANDUP FOR KIDS allows individuals to see the world through the street kids’ life. They are constantly improving and expanding the program to really make a difference in the world. GO!! STANDUP FOR KIDS!

- ANONYMOUS

This program had a tremendous effect on me. Meeting the kids and seeing how they live showed me an entire new culture and way of life that will forever make me reexamine the way I live and the way I see homeless and street kids. I think that it is amazing that STANDUP FOR KIDS provides the kids with help and stability without trying to disrupt their way of life while totally improving it at the same time. I don't think either party—kids or counselors, will realize the tremendous impact they have on each other. One girl I met on outreach seemed kind of tough and standoffish but when I met her at the beach a few days later, she told me and two others how there had been a time the other day when STANDUP FOR KIDS gave her food and how she was having a “really, really bad day” and how the volunteers totally cheered her up, so keep it up! Also after spending 24 hours on the streets, I saw just some of the hardships these kids face each day and I felt so proud and honored to be a part of STANDUP FOR KIDS, knowing for myself how much they help them.

- ANONYMOUS

This was an amazing experience for me all-around. I learned more than I ever imagined and met some amazing people. The 24 hours was so much fun in one sense, yet also the hardest thing I have ever done. I have been changed forever as a result of this week and I have learned things I consider to be invaluable to me. THANK YOU STANDUP FOR KIDS! This is a wonderful program! Keep it up!

- ANONYMOUS

