

Bahamas Adult Mission Trip Team Journal
June 19-25, 2016
Carlisle United Methodist Church

Introduction

Summer 2015 Erin Fleet our youth director and I were reviewing the summer mission trips and asking the question "What's the next step?" Who would really benefit by serving? How do we strengthen families in faith? We proposed something I had never done before; a youth mission trip and adult mission trip running side by side encouraging parents of youth to come too. And as our youth group becomes stronger for older high-schoolers, let's make it special for them.

Many meetings, prayers, and conversations later 23 from CUMC, 13 adults (with 4 being parents) and 10 youth/youth leaders set aside a week to be God's hands and feet with Bahamas Methodist Habitat.

In the pages ahead are the daily reflections from the adult team. Leaving we didn't really know each other, but trusted that God had a plan and would use us in ways that stretched us for God's service. I hope you will see how the support of our church, the Spirit of God within us, and the Spirit of God within the people we met made a lasting impact on everyone on our team.

– *Pastor Mira*

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**Sunday, June 19, 2016**

We made it! All 23 of us left Carlisle UMC at 5am and we got to St. Michael's Methodist Church by 2pm. What a fabulous facility. The women are staying in the conference room above the sanctuary. The men are in the youth building 100 yards down the street. Surprise blessings: ceiling fans, air conditioning, bathrooms and showers that are indoors! The Bahamas Methodist habitat crew of Hannah, Adam, Bush and Jerry were so welcoming in meeting us at the airport and driving us to St. Michael's.

After setting up our sleeping areas and making our beds on air mattresses, Pastor Mira took us all to Lickety Split for ice cream. ☺

The youth emptied and inventoried all of the stuff that we brought for our week and for another group from northern PA who will be here next week. So much stuff in just our seven suitcases.

Meat loaf, mashed potatoes, broccoli and mixed vegetables for dinner. Plenty for everyone.

We split into two groups for devotions: adult and youth. Lights out was at 10pm and everyone (guys anyway) slept till 6:15am.

The devotions for adults are based on the book “Transforming Ventures: A Spiritual Guide to Volunteers in Mission.” The theme for the first day was “Discovering God Already at Work”. The scripture for the theme was Isaiah 65:17-25.

We talked about the article Pastor Mira had us read before the last team meeting “To Heck With Good Intentions”.

Instead of coming to do our work and accomplish our purposes based on our intentions, we should seek to discover God’s intentions and what God already has done and is doing at and through St. Michael’s Methodist Church.

To serve as a sign and promise of God’s perfect reign (Lion lying down with the lamb – Isaiah 65:25), we can be positive and supportive of whatever is happening under whatever circumstances.

What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)

– *Bob Kilmer*

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Well – we’re here! Rising at 3am to shower and get to CUMC by 4:45am was a stretch, but the ride to the Philadelphia Airport and the flight to the Bahamas were as smooth as we could wish.

The airport at Nassau was modern, air-conditioned, and the guy at customs never even asked Kaitlyn or me one single question.

Bahamas Methodist Habitat workers Hannah and Adam (in charge of us), Jerry and Bush (in charge of the work – site coordinators) met us and we rode in two installments (adults first, then youth) in a 15-person van to St. Michael’s Methodist Church through lots of roundabouts. The van’s steering wheel was on the left, US-style, but Bahamians drive on the left – the “wrong” side of the road to us. Wonder if it’s harder or easier having the steering wheel on the opposite side from where it would be for the side of the road you’re actually driving on? Glad I’m not driving 😊

Beautiful flowering trees and bushes dot the area – hibiscus, oleander, and large trees with orange flowers that are striking.

Since we missed lunch, we had ice cream – great way to start the week! Dinner was late – island time! I think if we get to “Bush” time things are really late. A much more relaxed outlook!

The women are sleeping in one big room with air conditioning – is life good or what? Accommodations are nice, much better than sometimes. We’ll see what showers are like tomorrow.

Looking forward to work and beach!

– *Barb Harpel*

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Monday, June 20

We all survived our first night sleeping in the church! Some people froze and some were hot. Most of us were all blessed to have AC in our rooms! Breakfast was awesome! We had eggs, bacon, and pancakes. Very delicious! After breakfast, we all completed our chores. Once the chores were done, off to the work site we go!

The worksite we are working at is a local nursing home. The first task of the day was to go into the home and meet the residents and staff. When we said, "Good Morning" to the residents all of their faces lit up. They were all so happy to see us all. After saying good morning to the residents, we all went out and got our jobs for the day. The jobs consisted of washing windows, mowing, weed whacking, painting, building a closet, and placing cabinets. We all divided into mini-groups and did whatever Steve and Frank told us to do. During our work time, all of a sudden it started to pour down rain. Most of us ran for cover or went inside. During our work time it rained twice, but that didn't stop us. When our work time was over we all went to the beach! The beach was very windy, but very enjoyable! Overall, it was a great day!

– Chyann Jewell

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Well we finally got to work, do what we came for, helping our neighbors in the Bahamas. We went to the "...Christy" home for the elderly.

Outside pretty much the entire yard needed mowing and much of it needed weed-whacking. Inside they wanted a closet built to give them more storage. We also decided to wash the outside of the windows.

At first it seemed we had too many people for the jobs to be done. But like most mission trips, people just started pitching in where they thought they could help. Before you knew it, all jobs were progressing nicely.

The outside job was definitely the hottest and hardest. But we rotated people through these jobs so no one would get overheated. And God made sure we took breaks as he threw in a couple of rain showers!! All in all a very productive day and no one got hurt.

After work we went back to the church to change into our swim suits to go to the beach. The water was wonderful and refreshing. After about an hour it was back to the church to get cleaned up and have dinner and have our evening activity.

– Frank Williams

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I started with a less than positive attitude but after only one day it has started to change. I was way out of my comfort zone at the old folks home when I felt the need to walk around and converse with others outside of our group. I met Naomi who was a volunteer and we

talked for about 30-45 minutes about many things including family, the area, etc, and of course I had to bring up that I did notice many classic or antique vehicles. She said there are very few but most are in garages. Her and her family are into the same stuff I am, which made it easier to talk with her. I worked with Kevin and Melissa to build a closet and it was a bit challenging waiting hours for material but I am doing my best to conform to this way of living. One of the high points today was to see Melissa after a couple tries successfully put in drywall screws with a screw gun (I believe she was out of her element too). It was a good first day. I am very thankful for showers, AC, decent bed, and the great people I am here with.

– Steve Day

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1. Barb just a wonderful person – work on weed-whacking and helping mowing this unbelievable lawn. We all had a joyful day.
 2. Bob weed-whacking and mowing did a great job doing both; Bob has a lot of good talking points a very nice and interesting person.
 3. Chyann very hospitable, very energetic and worked very hard painting plywood and mowing.
 4. Frank was very instrumental fixing the weed-whacker and helping out with the carpentry work.
 5. Hope very good worker always joking making everyone laugh.
 6. Jody our historian making sure she keeps us up to date with everything on the island and very good Sunday School teaching and everything else that we do not know or understand.
 7. Kaitlyn she also works painting with her sister and Hope. They all get along laughing and joking.
 8. Kevin is one of the work foremen – gets his crew up to date of what needs to be done.
 9. Melissa works with building crew; was very delighted working with an electric screw driver.
 10. Stacy working well outside raking grass and getting bent out of shape seeing small living things.
 11. Steve’s another work coordinator giving good suggestions how the work should be done.
 12. Pastor Mira: she’s like a grasshopper jumping around to see that everything is in place and keeping us all in check.
 13. Wes this is my first time doing a journal and being in a wonderful group of people. Not a member of your church just yet, but working on becoming one. Thank you all Team 2.

– Wes Chandler

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**Tuesday, June 21**

Had a slightly restless night due to a really loud storm. Ate French toast with some interesting spice. Eventually arrived at our work site where we finished mowing. Jerry gave me a Sawzall to trim the shrubs. I put 3 more coats of primer on the plywood with Kate. I am constantly surprised by the hospitality of the staff of the nursing home. They brought Bahama travel books to look at as well as a cookbook. They gave us mangoes and tambrin sauce. We had lunch then had the pleasure of painting inside rather than outside. At the end of the workday we changed clothes and went to a different beach than last night. Kate and I were separate from everyone else because of the seaweed and a group of local kids came over and talked to us. Had twice as much fun as the night before. No getting knocked over by the waves and getting scratched up by the rocks. All in all a very good day. We accomplished a lot and made several people happy that their yard is now mowed and their shelves are almost done. We also added a fresh coat of paint in places.

– Hope Sale

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We just finished our second day at the Nurse Naomi Anna Christie Center for Older Persons. Today it didn't rain at all (after some showers yesterday that caused us to stop outdoor work a few times)! But some of the ground was still too soggy after last night's thunderstorm so the tall grass in the left back section of the yard will have to wait until tomorrow ... or whenever it's dry enough for us or another team.

Keshia, one of the staff, seems determined to expose us to Bahamian food – since she found out we're being fed American food she's been bringing treats. Yesterday was sliced watermelon and fresh mangoes – today more mangoes and tambrin sauce. The mangoes are called hairy mangoes – the skin is smooth but the flesh is very fibrous. They taste so good you don't mind the stuff that gets stuck in your teeth! Tambrin is a pod – Keshia removed the seeds and cooked them somehow – it was wonderful!

Her hospitality is outstanding – a reminder of how we all should be. She offered tea (how could I refuse), encouraged us to look at the travel books, and was just plain willing to help in any way she could.

The beach was outstanding – sunny and refreshing (a little too much seaweed but that's minor) and dinner was a Bahamian chicken curry over rice (Keshia would be thrilled) with a really great cole slaw.

As far as the trip itself and our purpose here and our expectations: lodging and meals are better than I expected, we have warm showers, and as usual the people for whom we're doing the work are giving us far more than we give them. I hope the work we'll continue over the next two days will help to repay them for their kindness and their generosity and their willingness to have these 13 Americans traipsing through their home and upsetting their living and work routines.

My favorite thing? The short worship service today at the home held by the staff for the residents. Though many residents do not speak often or much, they knew all the words to "Because He Lives"!

– Barb Harpel

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Tuesday – morning dawned cloudy and with a “coolish” breeze. Off and on showers predicted. Breakfast (French toast and sausage), lunch-packing and chores went quicker today. Off to the work site – “eightish”.

Heavy storms during the night left the site yard VERY wet and swampy!! But the outside crew began more mowing and trimming in spite of it – including me (raking and carrying piles of cut grass). Everyone pitches in and helps as needed. Jobs are traded when someone tires – done very casually. Waiting today was for the shed to be unlocked so we could retrieve the paint supplies and get to painting – trim, doors and more trim and doors. We are doing a lot of work indoors and it will be a nice thing for the residents eventually.

Enjoying talking to the residents as able – Mae, Millie, Cain, etc – three women and five men. The staff are so sweet to us – provided more fresh mangoes, some tastes of tambrin (a pod with seed which she had cooked into a sweet sauce, something like apple butter). Also provided for us to look at – a Bahamian cookbook, calendar with Bahama pictures and a book of history and more info re Bahamas.

Finished mowing, closet is near finished, cleanup at 3 and bus back and get ready to go to another beach – BEACH SAUNDERS – beautiful, warm, aqua – (but lots of seaweed). Swam for 45 min. Back and showered and got ready for dinner.

Great day until we learned Wes got sick. Pray he is OK!

– Jody Monoski

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Great night’s sleep after the first day of work. I woke up at 6:38AM and woke all the guys at 6:39AM. We all got over to breakfast by 7:00AM. I think I’ll set my alarm for 6:30AM from now on.

We packed our lunches before breakfast and then had French toast and sausage, and cereal for breakfast. After morning chores we headed out to the worksite.

We finished mowing and weed whacking and then got a new job of painting the men’s bathroom. I got the chance to meet 3 of the residents: Fred and Edstrom and Millie.

Fred was 76 and Edstrom was 90. Edstrom had been a carpenter and a painter and if you gave him anything that required the use of his hands he would master it.

We got a lot done with the closet and laundry room and even started painting more rooms in the nursing home.

After work we went to Saunders Beach. Breeze was warm, but there was a bit of seaweed. Saw a large red starfish about 10 feet deep. It was so clear – I could see it without my goggles. Got a fright with Wes getting low in blood sugar. But he turned around with an energy drink.

– Bob Kilmer

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Wednesday, June 22

Some of us got up a little late this morning. Breakfast was great: breakfast consisted of bacon eggs, blueberry muffins, cornbread and bananas. After breakfast, we did our chores and headed out to our worksites. When we got there we unloaded and started our jobs. Some of the jobs consist of painting, finish building the closet, sanding, making a path, and fixing a roof. During a free time Bob, Jody, Kate, Barb, and Hope decided to sing songs with the residents. Bob played the guitar while the rest sang and danced. While they did that Keshia taught me how to make conch fritters with sauce. Also, she talked about different kind of spices used here and desserts found here. After the fritters were done, we all got to try some! She also made us a cold, refreshing mango juice. What a fantastic lady she is! Very blessed to have met her! Even though it was very hot out today we still got the work done. We usually go to the beach after the work site, but tonight we did not go due to Bible study.

– Chyann Jewell

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I start off this morning not wanting to wake up at all. I went downstairs to get ready for the day and breakfast. Breakfast was really yummy. We had eggs w/ some type of seasoning, bacon, cornbread, and homemade blueberry muffins!! ☺ After everyone was done with breakfast, we did our chores and headed to the worksite. We all waited outside for about 10 minutes until we could start doing our jobs. I painted most of the morning with Barb and Hope. I enjoy painting since I done it before on previous mission trips. I helped out singing with the residents which was fun. I got to watch a demo on conch fritters with sauce by Keshia which was fun to watch and eat since I am a chef myself. She is so nice to us and everything! She will be missed. She also made us a mango type shake which was awesome! I painted more and cleaned up till we were ready to go back to the church. When we all were getting our showers we all had 20 mins until dinner was served. I wasn't too happy getting one really fast but I have to say it was one of my quickest ones. Ha ha. Overall, today was a pretty good day. ☺

– Kate

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Day 3 workday at the Christie home for the elderly – working on many activities today – more painting, drywall work, mudding and sanding, working on the new linen closet, prepping to pour a concrete walk between the main house and the shed, and repairing a hole in the roof of the shed Wow!

But while we accomplished a lot, the highlight of the day involved the residents. Bob Kilmer found out that they had a guitar but it was badly out of tune, so he tuned it. The next thing you knew Bob was playing the guitar, old favorite religious songs, and all the residents and half of our work crew were all singing. You could see the happiness in all the faces of the residents. They really appreciated the time we spent with them, more so than the time we spent fixing up their residence. The one resident who probably was the most happy was Herbert, who owned the guitar. Later that day we heard Herbert playing the guitar and singing, not necessarily on key but it was definitely joyful.

– *Frank*

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Today is hump day. According to Hannah – the hardest workday of the week. Arrived at worksite at 0815. The residents were still eating breakfast. Started working at 0910. It is hazy, hot, and humid.

Yes, it was a hard workday! We were busy from 0915 through 1645. We had a short, late lunch and then right back to work. But by the end of the day, all was good! The team came together and all worked to finish (for the day) the assigned projects.

I was impressed by Steve's and Bob's patience and confidence in the ladies' abilities to use power tools. I'm sure that Steve and Bob did much to instill confidence in Melissa and Stacy.

Jerry and Bush, our hosts, are excellent site and program managers. They are gifted in managing multiple tasks at once and delegate responsibility very professionally. Bush is also an outstanding tour guide!

I am particularly surprised by how fast the week is going. The days are long, but pass very quickly.

– *Kevin*

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### **Thursday June 23**

We completed our last day of work for the residents. We started our day hesitant that our jobs would not get completed. By working together as a team and determination what we needed to get completed got completed. There is definitely more work to complete but I feel so good about the work we did. The staff now have a nice area for laundry and a closet to store right outside. There will also be a pathway that leads from the back of the house to the shed. The house looks so much brighter for the residents with all the painting. When we said goodbye to the residents it was such a sad time and happy time. I saw God during this time because they were so appreciative for what we did and all of them want us to come back soon. The staff was so kind and welcoming making us so many delicious "home" treats. Today was conch salad which was good but had a lot of heat.

I also have seen God in the relationships we have built with one another throughout the week. Many of the people in the group I did not know but have gotten to learn more about during this time.

I was very nervous going on my first mission trip but I have learned so much and would love to go on more. It was a good experience to be able and share this trip with my son as well.

Tonight we had a group discussion with both groups (adults & youth) about their experiences while on the mission trip. It was interesting hearing the different experiences and spiritual growth that everyone went through either by themselves or as the team.

– *Melissa Greenwood*

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Today was the final day at the work site. The day to say goodbye to the residents and the staff. Over the past 4 days we accomplished many things. We painted and painted some more. We built shelves for storage and tiled a room that will eventually hold the washer & dryer so more shelves can be put in their current location.

Jody washed all the windows. We mixed cement and made a sidewalk between the back door and storage shed. We mowed 3-ft-tall grass and trimmed everything, including cutting bushes in half. It was bittersweet leaving today, knowing that the improvements we did will brighten all their lives.

– *Hope Sale*

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Last day of working! Saying goodbye to staff & residents is hard! Breakfast: eggs, bagels, potatoes, muffins. Very sunny & hot today – first day at site without rain. Many projects today: finish roof on shed, finish tile in laundry room & closet, finish washing windows (my job), finish trimming out & painting closet, mixing concrete for walkway to shed. Can't imagine we'll get it all done!!!

Everyone worked VERY hard today. (Planned to sing again with residents, but never had time.) At the end of the day, Jerry had a new project – moving the home's sign by the road to be more visible & adding an arrow pointing in the direction of the home – used some of the concrete, new holes, & then repositioned it – looked great!

Tonight is free night – no special activity (dinner at 7). After work, went to Saunders Beach – so beautiful and felt so good! ...Lovely reminder that we are in the Bahamas!! Dinner tonight is pork chops, baked potatoes & veggies. Excited for tomorrow's day of sightseeing & beach. Very tired from all the work – but loved the people at our site and feel we made a real difference in the home's needs.

– *Jody*

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Today was our last workday and the jobs were completed, all but a few minor details. I have enjoyed learning to sand drywall, use a circular saw to cut wood, use a crowbar to remove tack strips, & to lay ceramic tile. I was worried about the food we would have to eat here, but it was all wonderful & delicious except for the conch salad which was very spicy. It has been a pleasure to spend time with other church members & getting to know them all better. My biggest fear of bugs came to reality with the poisonous centipede-like creature. Singing with the residents was also a highlight of the week. Learning of the 700 islands here & listening to the pastor & his wife was a joy. It was a special gesture of Keshia to provide special island treats for us such as the fresh mangoes, tambrin sauce, mango juice, and conch fritters which were my favorite. Getting to see the banana tree, mango tree, tambrin tree, coconut tree, and almond tree in season was something unexpected and enjoyable. Of course the driving on the opposite side of the street still doesn't seem right after a few days of being here. The beautiful crystal clear blue waters are breathtaking. Will never forget our "Island Time" in the Bahamas, and can only hope that our residents are entertained by more groups like ours and more visitors to help them pass the day by faster.

- Stacy

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Friday, June 24

This is the last day. This being our down day, we are going on a bus tour. We started by going through town, and past the Governor's house.

We also visited two forts and we all went to the market place, where the local people sold their various goods to the tourists. Most of us bought many items. We watched one ship unload new cars, and we watched three cruise ships dock. You could see in the eyes of the two teams that we were very relaxed and comfortable on our next to the last day. We toured the Queen's Stairs then went to eat lunch. Our last tour we went to the beach, for our last dip into the warm ocean. We came back to our residence and had devotion time before we ate. Then we had clean up time, and moments of reflection on the whole week. Being a member of Team #1 we went over all of our accomplishments and how good we work together on all our projects, and hopefully didn't get under each other's skin, I don't believe we did and all got along together.

Pastor Mira being the Shepherd kept her flock in check at all times and she should be proud of herself. Finishing, I believe we all did a very good job in the Bahamas.

- Wes

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Today was a really fun day because it was our free day. Hannah and Adam rented a bus for us I think and we got to go to the Straw Market. The Straw Market isn't my favorite place because the Bahamians know how to pull you in and buy their things. We walked around the market and it was fun still. I didn't get anything personally because I was there last November and got something then. Others got some souvenirs that were pretty neat. When we were waiting for the bus to pick us up, I watched a cruise ship port. I was so tempted to get on it haha for lunch. We all ate at the Fish Fry which was pretty interesting and top off with the beach for an hour. The interesting fact was that the beach we swam at, the movie Jaws 4 was filmed there so I was happy to get to swim in the ocean part of the scenes that was filmed in! I also forgot that we got to see a fort called Fort Montague and walked down the steps of the "Queen's Staircase" I think which had 64-65 steps. Overall, we had an awesome day!!

– Kate

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Our last day here. We spent the day as tourists! Woke up at 7am for breakfast. The extra hour of sleep was needed and appreciated.

We capped a successful week with a long workday Thursday. All the projects came to a close. It was so neat seeing 13 adults come together as a lean, mean, mission work team.

After a late breakfast, we boarded a bus and headed to the "Straw Market" to buy souvenirs. We watched three cruise ships dock; what a mass of people! We then saw some historical sights and went to the "Fish Fry" for lunch. We had a lot of food for not a lot of money! I had a tropical salad; a strange combination of mango, pineapple, onions, green peppers, red peppers and apples. I couldn't finish it.

After lunch we found our way to the beach. The water was warm and shallow. A perfect ending to a long week.

– Kevin

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Today was our free day, we got to go to the Straw Market & purchase some souvenirs and met a few aggressive sales people. I purchased coconut water in a coconut which was very refreshing. We also went to Fish Fry for lunch & I had lobster & hot wings which tasted great & portions were large. Last but not least we went to the beach which was very refreshing. I am a very reserved person who generally keeps to myself. I keep my friends close & my circle small but I can honestly say after spending a week with many people I normally just say "hi" in passing I feel I have made many new friends and my circle has gotten larger.

– Steve Day

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**Saturday, June 25**

Today is the day we head home. It is a sad and happy time for me. I am happy to head home to my family and my own bed. I am sad to leave the Bahamas and the friends I have met here. Also all the CUMC friends I have built a relationship with over the past week.

I pray that we have a safe trip home and that the homeowners we helped throughout the week stay healthy and continue to grow in Christ and our residents have friends and family that visit.

– *Melissa Greenwood*

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It's Saturday and time to go home. It has been a pleasure to work with everyone & spend time with everyone this week. I am anxious to get home & spend time with my family & dogs before heading back to work. May we all have safe travels home. It's been a rewarding experience to see all that we were able to accomplish in the Bahamas and hope to do more in the future. It's been a great trip!

– *Stacy*

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**After the trip:**

Since I took on the job of typing up the journal (because curiosity kills the cat and I didn't feel like dying) I took the opportunity as I was typing to see if there was anything that I would like to remember about the trip that wasn't in someone's daily writing. There were a few things that stuck out in my mind.

The first was the evening Pastor (? already can't remember their names, nor which night it was!) and his wife spoke to us about their church and the Bahamas. It was a long night and I was very tired but I thought they showed such love for their country and were working so hard to make it better. And they were so kind to take time out of their obviously very busy schedules to help us understand their country.

Second was the evening we strolled the neighborhood handing out flyers for VBS. I sure hope they got some kids for our efforts. Don't know about anyone else but that was VERY outside my comfort zone – I hate to knock on doors where I know people much less in a foreign country.

Third, one of my few regrets is that we did not have a chance to attend a worship service there. I thoroughly enjoyed the Bible study the Pastor led and would have loved to hear a sermon – I think it would have been pretty darn good.

And last, I don't want to forget: historians and assistant historians and the banter between Wes and Jody, giggle time at night trying to settle down to sleep, and the love, care and

concern we all felt for Wes when he wasn't feeling well – and how relieved and glad we were that he was OK. (Since he mentioned that himself several times during group time I hope that was OK to include here.) This group of people really became a team, and I think we're all the better for it. And as mostly always seems to happen, we went to give of ourselves but only succeeded in bringing more love back. Thanks, everyone, and thanks be to God!

– Barb

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Conclusion

I write this entry a few days after returning home, having been reacquainted with my own bed and shower, and having continued conversations with many from our team. What a week it was! In seven days we went from being strangers to being friends with those 15 and those 75! We were blessed to serve at two amazing places: the youth at a home for a single mom of a 1-month-old, 4-year-old and 11-year-old on the verge of being evicted because they a new roof (or three large holes repaired) and adults serving at the Christie Home for the elderly with special needs. In the nurses and residents we were reminded of God's unfailing ever-sustaining love for us and all God's children. We met local Bahamians who shared their culture, island, and construction skills generously. We had wonderful food prepared for us and were reminded of the calming renewing beaches of the Bahamas that are world-renowned.

My favorite memory looking back was Thursday night when we didn't have a planned evening activity but instead as a large combined teams sat in a circle and reflected. Together we heard about each other's projects, saw the joy and laughter of service, and pointed out God moments for each other. God was certainly moving through everyone on our teams during the week in the Bahamas. I left knowing this is where God wanted us each to be.

Thank you CUMC for your commitment to sharing God with those beyond Carlisle and for the support to make ALL our mission trips possible. Thank you team for clearing your calendar for a week, going to a new culture and country, sleeping on floors and working in high humidity to follow God's call to serve others. May you always remember that this week you were used by God to share love with others.

– Pastor Mira

Odd notes that were in the journals:

Poinciana – the larger trees with the orange flowers that were everywhere (for all you trivia and nature buffs)