

SJIIM Student Reflections (Philippines)

Christine

I think what has blessed me the most is being with the Filipino people. The students we met were so warm and friendly, and they never failed to make me laugh and smile. They showed me what a true Lasallian family feels like. I also learned how to appreciate the little things in life from the less fortunate. Despite their circumstances, they found joy in dancing and spending time with us. Their attitude has been truly inspiring. I just hope that I will be able to bless SJIIM and carry forward the Lasallian spirit I have caught here.

Hui Wen

The word that has been constantly ringing in my head is blessed. I am blessed to be given this exposure to a side of the world I have never encountered before. I am blessed to have made friendships that will forever stay in my heart. I am blessed to meet inspiring, passionate and loving friends no matter our nationality, culture, race and religion. Most importantly, I am blessed to be a part of the Lasallian family. To realise that we have only known each other for 1 week really blows my mind. I was showered by never-ending care and respect by the individuals I have met. They never fail to amaze me by their ability to step out of their comfort zone and put their 100% heart in everything they do. All of us are so different but somehow, somehow, we fit together perfectly like legos. For our Filipino friends.....their enthusiasm and personalities have been the highlight of our visit to DLSZ.

Joshua

This camp has been a real eye-opener for me. I have learnt to embrace the core values of the Lasallian mission and to be a faithful steward for the society. I now realize that there are many people who are unfortunate and destitute. There may be some things that are unchangeable, but even a simple act of kindness can lift their spirits. After all, spiritual wealth is more valuable than physical wealth. I am also really grateful for the wonderful opportunities that I have here to experience the Lasallian education.

Wey Han

Before I left Malaysia, I was apprehensive regarding the challenges I would face. However, I quickly settled into the SJI community and bonded quickly with them..... Witnessing the lives of the less fortunate has made me feel how blessed and fortunate I am to be brought up in a caring family and amiable friends. We have to aid the destitute as a famous quote goes 'a rich man is nothing but a poor man with money'.

Ash

I'm eternally grateful to have met many of these under-privileged children. As a girl who believes in loving all and serving all, this camp has been a golden opportunity for me to live my passion for helping the poor. I'm looking forward to more activities that would make a noble Lasallian. Thank you.

Shao Jun

Michael is one of the kids in Southville 3 who faces famine. Although he is 10y/o he only looks like a 6y/o kid because he is undernourished. He wasn't my partner for the newspaper dance, his partner was another kid as there are only 4 ate and kuya [*big brothers and sisters*] in a group whereas there are 10 children, so he needed to pair up with another child. What made me reflect was during the letter exchange event, we saw Michael reading the letters of his peers given by other ate and kuya but he didn't have one; we saw disappointment on his face. Eventually, we wrote a simple letter for him and the reaction on his face was priceless. It's a great thing to make people happy, especially children as it gives motivation to them and they will be determined to change their plight, consequently becoming great pillars of the nation.

Amanda

Not only valuable experiences and important life lessons but also unique friendships have been made from this past week. I've never thought we would be connected mentally and spiritually so quickly as we're merely just strangers from all walks of life a few days ago. Apart from the exposure we've been given to visit the elderly and children, the people I've known here has been a life-changing experience. Therefore, I'm grateful that we all have the same goal: to be the change for our community.

Angeline

One of the most striking experiences of this trip so far was meeting a girl in the Goodbye Gotum programme who completely changed my perspective on life. The first thing that caught my eye was the way she sat with her arms around 3 little children. When it was time for the kids in the programme to have their lunch, she was feeding all 3 kids and refused to touch her food until I offered to feed them so she would eat. My initial thought was that they were all her brothers and sisters but upon further bonding, I found out that none of them are her siblings; 1 is her cousin and 2 are her neighbours. At this point I felt so touched that a child as young as 9 years old knows how to put the needs of people who are more helpless than her before herself. She was so happy, loving and willing to share that it allowed me to realise that happiness and fulfilment do not stem from monetary items but rather treating others with full sincerity and being willing to extend a helping hand to anyone that needs it without expecting anything in return. This is one lesson that I will never forget.

Emily

My most memorable experience [at Goodbye Gutom] with [the little girl called] Decileigh was during the 'Newspaper Dance'. Her face lit up when I bounced her on my hip while dancing to the rhythm of the lively music that filled the hall and she smiled ear to ear.

I learnt 3 important lessons that day:

1. To appreciate the life God has given to me. I am grateful to be fed and never go to bed hungry. I understand how privileged I am to be given quality education. Not everybody receives that, but it is our mission to alleviate poverty and give a helping hand to the less fortunate.
2. "It isn't about waiting for the storm to pass. It's about dancing in the rain." Although the children of Southville go through hardships, they are still able to live life with a happy attitude and a bright smile on

their faces. Whatever you are going through, be happy. There is someone else out there who has it worse than you.

3. "Smile. Have you ever noticed how easily puppies make human friends? Yet all they do is wag their tails and fall over." -Walter Anderson

Rachel

I now have a deeper understanding of the Lasallian values 'Faith, Service, Communion'. Exposure to social work at the Haven for children and Tahanan ni Maria really opened my eyes about helping the Least, the Last and the Lost.....Bonding with someone who didn't share the blessings I have changed my mind set. A strong will to help everyone from the bottom of my heart is growing inside of me.

Miko

I could say that this is my first time of experiencing this much in just one week. even though it's been 8 years that I have been studying in a Lasallian school, I'm pretty sure that some of my newfound Malaysian friends are even more "Lasallian" than I am. I'm really glad that I have met them because I was able to share my culture as a Filipino and some of the things I know about being a "Lasallian." However, more than being able to share these things, I'm really glad because this camp truly made me feel how it is to serve and be in one community despite having different culture and beliefs. This camp has already made me feel more Lasallian than I've ever felt before. This is why it makes me look forward to the days when they will be my classmates

Daryl

This camp is the coming together of so many talented individuals and I feel so blessed to have been selected for this trip. This camp has helped us to be more eloquent speakers, confident individuals, and agile thinkers.

The most striking experience for me so far was the visit to the old folks' home, Tahana Ni Maria. My time there made me realise that there are many neglected people out there. Besides that, it also made me remember my late grandmother which was a very touching experience. To sum up, this camp has given us many invaluable experiences and I am happy that we got to be a part of it.

Ying Xuan

The greatest lesson I have picked up here is that we should be more patriotic to our own country because without it, we will have no identity. It is our culture and customs that makes us us. Looking at how much the Filipinos respect their country, I feel really sad that a lot of people want to give up on our country. We should try and help our country instead. I also feel quite sad for the people who live under the line of absolute povertyUnfortunately, I do not believe that the problem of poverty could be solved, but instead each and every one of us will have to take turns being the one to support the community.

Linda

The past few days in the Philippines has confirmed to me that poverty is not just a real problem, but also a problem which requires immediate action. But what struck me the most is the way everyone still has

such strong faith in God despite the circumstances in their life that would've caused them to stray away from religion.

The visits to the places such as the home for the elderly and the orphanage has done more in terms of reinforcing my will to serve the people in need of help. I've never felt more sure in my life that my purpose in life is to serve God and all his subjects regardless of race or religion.

Cadence

Many ask why do I choose to study IB, instead of the other programs I am offered and this's always my answer: I believe IB is not an ordinary pathway, and through this I'll get to experience utterly different people in an unfamiliar environment, which I believe will unravel another side of myself. There's this saying that goes: 'Life only begins once you step out of your comfort zone'. What matters most about this trip to the Philippines is that I am right about it, as I've experienced incessant emotional ups and downs which have made me grown inches.

Having to be here and to be involved in all the social activities, I realized that before this, I've never TRULY reached out for those in need and helped them for the sake of TRULY helping. It's the moment you'll thank God for giving you this opportunity of a lifetime.

Marc

The program has impacted me and made me realize things that I have never thought about before.I learned that I need to serve all people, especially those who are considered the least, the lost and the last. I learned how to be one with others; I had fun with them and, through the programs in which we participated, we were able to successfully make the people whom we served happy. And last, I learned how can I properly follow all of the Lasallian values. This program affected my perspective of our world, and I saw that we Lasallians need to help every marginalized person here on earth, and start the change we long to see.

Annabel

The experiences in service for the past two days has made me understand more about myself and taught me priceless lessons about life, that is, as a part of a community, I have the responsibility to help those in need. I feel that I have become an entirely different person in terms of perspective and mind set. The experience of being here has opened my eyes to the things that I have never been aware of before. I've never realized that poverty is such a big issue, and people who are able should really start helping and love them.

Hui Qi

The past week had been memorably amazing and inspiring. From touring la Salle schools to visiting abandoned elders and street children, I learned so much about what being a Lasallian means and how I am capable of being a spark that ignites others. The experience made me realise what you get from serving others: the happiness of the ones you served. I am also extremely grateful for meeting so many wonderful friends from Philippines that allow the experience to be filled with positivity and values.

Hong Xuan

I was initially reluctant to join this camp.But everyone I met greeted me with an exuberant smile, more than willing to bestow the gift of friendship.I felt I had learnt more than any class or tuition I have attended. I am truly blessed to be able to experience the essence of Lasallian education which I was oblivious to until this week. Embracing the core values, I feel my dedication towards humanity and determination grow stronger by the night. This has been a very enkindling experience. Thank you, my fellow Lasallians.

Jane

I have always had an inner passion for helping the less fortunate and making a change among our society. Over the years of maturing I realise the passion was slowly fading and I started to aim for material happiness. Through experiences such as Goodbye Gutom and visiting the Haven for children I was able to be exposed to the Least, the Last and the Lost. By observing their condition and how the volunteers worked to alleviate their difficult situation ignited my sparks of serving again.

Wei Lyn

One phrase shared at the closing ceremony amidst our new friends from DLSZ resonated with my own summation of this camp: "we enter to learn, leave to serve". Every day we encounter new examples of the spirit of St. John Baptist De La Salle in every gesture of unanticipated empathy and thoughtfulness. I believe that these humbling core values of Faith, Service and Communion are beginning to be manifested in our own actions also, as we are moved daily by the things our eyes are now opened to see. From this experience I will cherish the friendships and acceptance, the sense of belonging that comes from the realization that we are part of a larger family and the invaluable insights to lead our school in the illustrious path shown to us. But perhaps the most important, and the experience I am most proud of, is the opportunity to be at both the giving and receiving end of this blessing, to be shown the Lasallian love and Filipino hospitality, and be given the chance to pass it on. This camp has helped me discover myself and my capabilities, and I hope to continue the legacy bestowed upon us, not as "me", but as "we".

Nimeesha

This camp so far has really opened my eyes to a new world. Being in a new country for the first time, I have learnt to be less judgemental, to move away from the stereotypes and norms, to be able to make friends without taking into account our differences, but rather embracing them, and seeing the similarity that binds us together. I've learnt to be a team player as well as a leader, to be there to listen to my friends during all the sharing sessions and encourage them to push further, to appreciate all that I have. The phrase 'the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in service' resonates deeply in me, because there have been many moments that I feel lost and confused, but serving others, helping those in need fulfil my deeper purpose in life, and I see that now.

Da Ruey

Over the course of the last week, I have learnt that I have to continue to challenge myself to live a less self-centred life. Instead, I should learn to live a life of service because the needs of the poor (financially, emotionally and spiritually) are everywhere. I have also enjoyed the experience of coming together with

so many other students of the same mind set and passion for learning and making a difference in the world and in our own country.

Catherine

Prior to this camp, I had my reservations on whether or not the group would be able to blend well, just to have those thoughts being trampled on later on with the realization that we are all one family. From the different activities which have led us to open up to each other more and more as the days pass I discovered that the 24 of us, regardless of interests, age, race, religion, or even past educational backgrounds, are willing to serve with everything we have, because of the harmonious dynamics we all bring to the table together. I feel very lucky to be given this opportunity to gain a greater sense of learning by listening to the perspectives of different people, and to open my eyes to the fact that I should be very grateful of everything that I have in my life.

