Mission Trip Takes Academy Students to Jamaica

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The thought of heading to Jamaica on spring break conjures up visions of relaxing on white sand beaches by crystal blue waters.

This April vacation though, a group of eighteen students and two chaperones from the Academy of Notre Dame traveled to Jamaica for a different reason.

The eight-day vacation was a service trip planned through the Academy's Mission & Ministry.

The students spent their first four days volunteering at the Mount Olivet Primary School in the rural farming community of Mandeville. Mount Olivet is a six classroom primary school that educates 126 children from the age of six through 13. The school’s children either have no family or come from single-parent households. Academy students assisted the Mount Olivet teachers in the classroom working to improve the children’s numeracy and literacy skills. They also helped to design and paint a mural on the outside of the school building.

“We were all transformed by the relationships we built with the children at the school, with the JVE staff, and with each other,” said Hope Griffin, director of Mission & Ministry at NDA.

Day five of the trip found the group hard at work farming with the locals of Mandeville and learning how to cook like a Jamaican.

The last leg of the trip was all about cultural immersion. The students traveled to Montego Bay where they toured the Rastafari Indigenous Village and learned about Rastafarian life, history, and traditions. They also attended a service at the Mount Olivet United Church where they joined in fellowship and worship with local community members.

“We had an amazing time in Jamaica,” Griffin said. “The country was beautiful, the food was delicious, and the people were so friendly. It was truly a life-changing week.”

The students who attended the Jamaica Service Trip were:

Mollie Anderson, Billerica, Grade 11

Melanie Boo, Lowell, Grade 11

Lauren Bradley, Tyngsboro, Grade 10

Jane Campbell, Amherst, NH, Grade 11

Eunji Choi, Westford, Grade 11

Cara Fischetti, Groton, Grade 10

Madelyn Hallisey, Pepperell, Grade 12

AnnMarie Kordish, Tyngsboro, Grade 10

Alexia Landry, Dracut, Grade 10

Juliette Lessard-Tetrault, Tyngsboro, Grade 11

Gabriela Llanos, Dracut, Grade 11

Grace Manley, Pepperell, Grade 10

Olivia Marion, Groton, Grade 11

Fiona Martin, Andover, Grade 11

Kayla Massicott, Carlisle, Grade 11

Brigit O'Dwyer, Pelham, Grade 11

Emma Paxton, Groton, Grade 10

Laura Pere, Tyngsboro, Grade 11

Chaperones:

Maria Collins, French/Spanish

Hope Griffin, Director, Mission & Ministry