

# Youth Tour 2015

## Day 1 – Los Angeles, CA

Reporters: Maleah McCullough and Tony Taylor

Devotion: Mark 16:15

Day 1 of our trip started with hugs and kisses goodbye from our parents. We got on the road at 7:10 am and was on our way to the Hoover Dam in Boulder City, Nevada. It was 11:32 am when we actually arrived in Nevada. Before we visited the Dam, we pulled into the Hoover Dam Lodge to unload our luggage. Our bus was not allowed to drive into Hoover Dam with luggage for safety reasons. After we unloaded everything at the Hoover Dam Lodge, we left for the power plant tour. There we learned lots of information about how important the Hoover Dam is. We also learned how it was built. Our tour guide, Zane, taught us what goes on in the four tunnels 54 stories underground. He also displayed to us electricity generators that are approximately 70 feet tall. After the tour, we visited an exhibit that showed us everything we needed to know about the Hoover Dam.

The Dam was built during the Great Depression. Over 3500 workers arrived from different parts of the United States. It took 5 years to complete. We learned that the workers had 3 shifts for 363 days with only 2 holidays off. Lake Mead is the largest man made lake in the United States and helps generate electricity to the entire Southwest Region. After generating electricity the water is released to the Colorado River. Hoover Dam sits in between the borders of Arizona and Nevada.

We left Hoover Dam at 4:15pm. On our way to St. George, Utah, we stopped to take a group picture in front of the Las Vegas welcome sign and toured the Vegas strip. The final stop before going to our hotel was the Golden Corral at 8:34 for dinner.

\*\*Youth Tour 2015 has officially started as of 7:10am. We thank you for your prayers and the show of support as we boarded our wonderful charter bus provided by Tour Coach. Be sure to check our website as the students will be assigned to report daily events. The students will also be challenged learn about responsibility and accountability. It is a group effort to make sure this journey is an eventful and successful one. Please continue to show your support by posting comments down below.

## Day 2-Salt Lake City, Utah

Reporters : Jalen Carter and Michael Boyd

Devotion: Proverbs 1:1

We woke up this morning at 7:00am. At 7:45 we ate breakfast. After breakfast, we returned to our rooms collected our suitcases and boarded the bus at 9:37 am. The first stop of the day was the St. George Dinosaur Discovery Museum. We learned many new things about dinosaur prints. Dr. Sheldon Johnson, an optometrist made the discovery of dinosaur fossils after removing layers of dirt and rocks on his property. He saw something peculiar in the rock and called his Geology Professor son in law to come check it out. The first time his son in law saw the rock, he told Johnson to stop selling the rocks because he had something special. They discovered the first fossils February 26, 2000. Archaeologist around the world and local volunteers gathered at the discovery site to help find more fossils. The museum was built around the site. In order to place huge amounts of fossil walls into the building, a large crane was used to lower each piece through the unfinished roof. Over 3.5 billion years ago, St. George used to be a lake that stretched 80 miles wide. After the lake dried up, it preserved foot tracks, plant and fish fossils.

We learned that the Raptor was named the State of Utah dinosaur because there was so many that lived there. After the tour was over, we made our way to Salt Lake City. The distance between St. George and Salt Lake City is 4 1/2 hours. Before arriving we had dinner at the Cracker Barrel. Afterwards, we visited the state capitol and took a group picture. It is the first of many capitols that we will visit.

## Day 3- Salt Lake City, Utah (Day 2)

Reporters: Caleb Smith and Amaya Wingfield

Devotion: Proverbs 3

Today we went to many different places that gave a multitude of information. The first place we went to was The Church of Latter Day Saints located at Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah. In the church we had a tour provided by volunteers that come from around the world at their own expense and study for 18 month to 2 years. Then we were able to roam the vicinity with our chaperone. We learned that they have a chapel and temple. The chapel is not used much anymore. The most it is used for are meetings. The temple is currently used to make higher promises to God.

Joseph Smith was the founder of Mormonism and published the Book of Mormon when he was 24 years old. His book was became popular and gained over 10,000 followers. The church that was originally built at Temple Square is filled with white pine that is painted to look like marble and oak. Inside the temple, a pipe organ is housed and has over 11,000 pipes. Because the Mormon religion continues to grow, a newer temple had to be built. It currently holds 21,000 people. We learned that the church supplies the CIA and Government with their research technology. In 1841 Brigham Young was made the president of the quorum of 12 apostles, the governing body of the church and second in authority to Smith. After Joseph Smith was murdered, Brigham Young moved the Mormon from

Nebraska to Utah. One of the most important monuments we saw was the Angel Moroni. It is said that Angel Moroni visited Joseph Smith many times. He was the protector of plates that was believed to be the Book of Mormon. There are numerous of LDS churches that have made statues of The Angel Moroni holding a trumpet and sits at the highest point of the church facing East. It symbolizes the spreading of the gospel and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. On February 3, 2008, Thomas Monson became the 16th President of The Church of Latter Day Saints.

After we left Temple Square; we went to the Clark Planetarium. We went in a movie simulator and learned about the sun and the moon. After we went to other information booths and learned about the temperatures of meteorites. For the last part of our tour we learned about each planet in our solar system. We also learned the temperatures, color and what they are made of.

Lastly we went to the Natural History Museum. This was the only place we went today where we didn't have a guide. The museum has 5 levels and each level got more interesting. Our favorite was the dinosaur exhibit. They have the evolution of the dinosaurs and their many relatives. Overall this is the best day we've had so far.

\*\*While the children continue to learn about responsibility and accountability, they are also learning about the benefits through giving. Before departing for our tour, Pastor Carol informed the students that Dr. Barbara M. Amos of Kinston Christian Center in Kinston, North Carolina will be traveling to Haiti to bring supplies to those in need. Without question, every participant including chaperones and our driver Mr. Wayne donated a total of \$306.46 to help increase the amount of supplies. We are beyond thrilled that our students decided to help those who are in need. They understand that there are people in other countries that are less fortunate than them and from the kindness of their hearts they stepped in and donated. We thank our Youth Tour participants for your donations.

## **Day 4- Cheyenne, Wyoming**

Reporter: Nia Boyd

Devotion: Proverbs 3

Our group left the Quality Inn and Suites around 8:00am. We left Salt Lake City, Utah to travel to Cheyenne, Wyoming. At 9:17am we passed the Echo Reservoir. Echo Reservoir is a lake that was created after Echo Dam was built in 1931. It is located in Summit County, Utah. At 9:20, we stopped at a rest place to look at some interesting things. All of us have never seen a mountain squirrel before. The rest stop had some history to it as well. We were between Utah's Red Canyon and today's roads (Highway 80) and streets follow some of 1800s trails. The Mormons, Pioneers, California and Pony Express trails all traveled through the Red Canyons. Interesting fact: During the time of 1856-61, the

Mormons from Europe traveled to Iowa more than 1,200 miles to Salt Lake City. Only 3,000 made it to Utah.

We reached the Port of Entry at 10:13am on the borders of Utah and Wyoming. Our driver Mr. Wayne had to park the bus to show papers that permit him to drive through the border. At 10:10am we entered Wyoming. At 12:56pm, we stopped again for a break. Outside was a small billboard about Mama Sage. Mama Sage or Sagebrush is a huge populated area filled with antelope and Sage Grouse. Sagebrush contains over 150 wildlife species.

At 4:00pm, we stopped at the capitol of Cheyenne, Wyoming. There are two statues in the front of the capitol building; Chief Washakie and Esther Hobart Morris. Esther Hobart Morris was the first female Justice of the Peace. Chief Washakie was a wise, generous, strong and courageous peacemaker of the Shoshone Tribe. At 4:30pm we settled in a restaurant called "Tortilla Factory". The Tortilla Factory is a family owned Mexican restaurant that was unknown in the past. It was first built on Stillwater Ave. Due to increased popularity, they built an even larger restaurant in February 2015. After dinner around 6:30pm we went to the hotel. Most of the youth ended their night with a wonderful swim at 7:00.

## Day 5- Cheyenne, Wyoming (Day 2)

Reporter: Geovanny Martinez and Anthony Davis-Dolphin

Devotion: Proverbs 3

Today is day 5 of the tour, so far we have learned a lot. The Comfort Inn served hot breakfast and we had biscuits, sausages, and eggs.

We began our day at the Transportation Museum. We learned that the city Cheyenne was established because Union Pacific built a railroad and everywhere a road was installed, a city was built. Cheyenne was built as the main station to the big railroads in Utah. To communicate in those times, people used the Intermediate Morse Code. The transportation museum had some of the original amenities from the 1860s, such as the train, scales, typewriters, telegrams, bells, and soot from the coals. After we left the transportation museum, we took pictures with Big Boy. Big Boy is a steam locomotive built by the Union Pacific Railroad. It was used to pull heavier loads on steeper tracks through the mountains at a faster speed. Today it sits in the middle of a local park for all to see.

After the museum, we headed to the Cheyenne Frontier Days Old West Museum. The Old Western Museum was full of different types of wagons such as ambulances, hearses, milk, and mail wagons. We learned Cheyenne has a parade every year to celebrate their culture. Also, Cheyenne is known for the

rodeos, racing, and horseback riding on Frontier Days. Bill Picket was the first black cowboy who created bulldogging. He died in 1932 after getting kicked in the head by a bronco. After the Old Western Museum, we dined at Perkins and washed our laundry at Dirty Duds. We ended the day by spending time in the lobby eating popcorn, cookies and playing games.

## Day 6-Omaha, Nebraska

Reporters: Janell Gray and Malik McCullough

Devotion: Proverbs 5

We officially arrived in Nebraska at 8:46am. It looked similar to Wyoming at first, but we were just starting our journey. At 9:03am we stopped at High Point Welcome Center. A woman who worked there told us about how the Lincoln Highway was like Route 66 in California. Lincoln Highway is the first transcontinental highway for automobiles and was known as “The Main Street Across America”. It is also the 1<sup>st</sup> national memorial to President Abraham Lincoln. In 1913 the highway stretched to 3,389 miles. Due to more development, the highway was shortened to 3,142 miles. It is still the longest and oldest highway in history. After looking around we boarded the bus and continued. At 10:57, we stopped at the Ogallala Eastbound Rest Stop. There were a lot of places to sit and they had brochures for tourists. At 12:36pm we stopped at Central Platte Valley rest stop in Dawson County. There was a lot of cotton flying around. Auntie J (Sister Joyce) told us that the settlers knew when they saw the large shaded trees; there was water nearby and it was a good place to settle. Our last rest stop was at 2:47pm at The Blue River Eastbound Rest Stop. We’ve been to a total of 4 rest stops. It took 7 hours to drive from Cheyenne, Wyoming to Omaha, Nebraska. The first place we visited was the State Capitol so you know we had to take a group picture. We took a picture in the hot sun but it was worth the memories. Our restaurant of choice was Cheddars in Lincoln. Everyone didn’t enjoy their meal, but we still had a good time. An hour later we arrived, at our hotel and it was lights out.

## Day 7- Chicago,IL

Reporters: Garin Gray and Daijha Belisle

Devotion: Proverbs 6

Today we all got up well rested in Omaha, Nebraska and headed to the bus with our suitcases in hand. For the daily devotion today Garin read Proverbs 6:20-23 and 27-29. Verse 20-23 talked about how

we should always remind ourselves of God's 10 commandments when we make any life decisions in order to stay on the right path. Verse 27-29 talked about adultery and he who commits it will be punished. This rule can be applied to the other 9 commandments. If we disobey one of them, they will not go unpunished. Afterwards, Dajjha said a prayer to keep us safe on the road, and at 8:07am we left the hotel and cruised the state line into Iowa at 8:10am. On the way we stopped at a rest stop that was very interesting. We learned about a man named Walce who designed the rest stop. At 10:28am we finally reached our first stop in Des Moines, Iowa. As a tradition on this tour, we stopped and took a group picture in front of the capital building. There were 8 staircases that led to the front doors. 10 minutes later, we boarded the bus and resumed our travels. Pastor Carol explained what we would be doing in Chicago for the next three days. She also mentioned that at the next rest stop, we are allowed to get a snack, but it couldn't be too big because she would be paying for it. After we grabbed a bag of chips, we compared the sodium of each bag of chips. Sister Joyce had the least sodium while Tony had the highest. As we made our way towards Illinois, the clouds began to roll in and it started to rain, but we continued to our destination. At 2:07pm, we crossed the Mississippi River into Illinois. At 2:48pm, we arrived at Fatty's for our evening dinner. We all enjoyed our meal. Then we hopped back on the road and made it to our destination an hour later. We checked into the Inn of Chicago right in the heart of Downtown.

## Day 8- Chicago, IL (Day 2)

Reporters: Tony Taylor and Maleah McCullough

Devotion: Proverbs 7

Day 8 of our trip was little different, because we didn't have breakfast. Instead we had Belvita crackers. Maleah read Proverbs 7, and Tony prayed us out. We left the hotel to meet our hosts/ tour guides, Mr. Walter and Mrs. Darlene. Mr. Walter gave us a little history of his family who lived in Chicago. On the way there we saw a lot of cool buildings and statues. After that, we were walking around looking at the Chicago Tribune building where the architects John Howells and Raymond Hood "Howells & Hood" had built in the mid 1920s. We also saw that the building had stones from different countries and regions throughout the world such as The Great Wall of China, The Berlin Wall, The Palace of Westminster, The Great Pyramid, Norte Dame de Paris, Taj Mahal and many more. Then, the whole group had received tickets courtesy of Mr. Walter and Mrs. Darlene to a cruise along the Chicago River. Throughout the city, Ms. Genelly, our tour guide explained every piece of information about buildings in Chicago. She also pointed out the use of different geometric, architecture and style of the most interesting skyscrapers. There were buildings where the years ranged from the early 1920s to the mid 1990s. Our river tour of Chicago ended, and we walked to where Mr. Wayne parked the bus and took a short drive to Mr. Walter's office. There we saw some paintings and had lunch. Turkey,

Ham and Roast Beef Sandwiches were provided along with chips and a small dessert. After we ate lunch, we listened to a presentation about Business and Entrepreneurship by Mr. Jenkins. 30 minutes later, we left Mr. Walters office and headed towards Willis Tower (formerly known as “Sears Tower”). After reaching the 103<sup>rd</sup> level, we stepped out onto the observation deck and enjoyed the view. The observation deck is a 360-degree view of Chicago. We took a group picture on a glass floor that extended away from the building making it look like we are standing in mid air above the city. The elevator ride made some of us nervous because it started shaking as we were going up. Once we got to the top, we were more excited. The Art Institute of Chicago. It is one of the top tourist attractions to visit in the world because of the different types of art that is there. Including, Rembrandt, Van Gogh, Renoir, Dali, Picasso, Monet etc. Each of us had our own favorite and our private tour guide Mr. Joe discussed the type of painting it was and how it came to be. We all left to dinner and ordered hamburgers for dinner at the Millennium Park restaurant. After dinner Pastor Carol treated us to some ice cream and walked back to our hotel, which was 5 city blocks away (3/4 mile). Overall today was a great day. We would like to thank Mr. Walters and Mrs. Darlene for treating us to a day in Downtown Chicago!

## Day 9-Chicago,IL (Day 3)

Reporters: Jalen Carter and Michael Boyd

Devotion: Proverbs 8

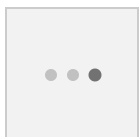
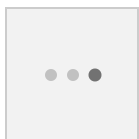
This morning, we left the hotel at 9:00am. While waiting for a red light, Sister Joyce taught us that you couldn't turn on Red lights like in California. We passed Soldier Stadium where the Chicago Bears. Our first tour of the day was The Museum of Science and Industry. While waiting for Pastor Carol and Mr. Mitchell we waited by an old subway train that had a Burlington Route sign on it. On the third level the main focus was Aerodynamics. You can go into a real United 727 airplane and there is a flight simulator. Jalen and Mr. Walter went on a flight simulator that required 3 minutes of training. Jalen was the pilot and Mr. Walter was the gunner. After training they entered the simulator and were strapped as if they were on a fighter jet. Whenever they used the controller to turn the simulator turned. It went an entire 360 degrees and they could feel the blood rush into their heads!

There were other model planes hanging on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor including The Stuka, Spitfire and Boeing 40 B-2. The Stukas were deadly accurate German diver bombers. They brought more destruction to the allies ground forces than any other aircraft during World War II. The Spitfire was England's greatest defense against German invasions. They were quick and maneuverable which made it very impressive in combat. Its advanced aerodynamics made it one of the most important military plane ever produced. The Spitfire took down hundreds of German fighters including Stukas. There was a 1992 film called

“Spitfire” about the life of R.J. Mitchell designer of Super marine Spitfire. It was one of many British propaganda films produced during the war. The Boeing 40 B-2 in 1927 became the first privately operated airplane for airmail and passenger service.

On the other side of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, we went into an 80 mph tornado inside a pod. We made spikes with magnets and ferrofluid. We saw firefighter equipment from over the decades. Because there were so many things to see, we were only able to see half of the second floor. Mr. Walter told us that it takes 3 days to complete the tour of the Museum of Science and Industry. On the second floor was the genetics lab where we saw baby chicks hatching, cloning devices, cell multiplications etc. After we left the museum, we went to Mrs. Darlene’s art studio. We met a colleague of Mrs. Darlene named Sam who is 17 years old. His father is another colleague of Mrs. Darlene. We saw artwork that she did from the age of 10 to now. She provided drinks and snacks as we looked around her studio. Before we left, Nia led a prayer to ask God to continue to bless Mrs. Darlene and her studio.

30 minutes later, we returned to The Art Institute of Chicago and started where we left off the day before. This time we saw American Art, Surrealism, and Abstract art. Before the museum closed, Mr. Walter and Mrs. Darlene gifted us with post cards of the art that we’ve seen over the last 2 days. We couldn’t end the evening without going to a popular restaurant that served Chicago style pizza. Geno’s East is a restaurant established by Sam Levine and George Loverde in 1966. Today it is tradition that customers take a marker and write on the walls or chairs. It was only fitting that we do the same. After searching for a marker, we watched as Mr. Walter did the honors of permanently placing “Youth Tour 2015” on the wall. Other student marked their names as well. We are so excited to officially be part of Gino’s East history.



After our dinner graciously provided by Mr. Walter and Mrs. Darlene, we walked a few short blocks to their home on the 43<sup>rd</sup> floor that overlooked Lake Michigan, and The Navy Pier. Desserts were served and pianists Natalie and Peter provided a private concert. As Natalie played her pieces, the clouds began to clear away and we saw the beautiful night sky and city life down below. Before leaving, Mr. Walter gave us a quiz on what we learned in Chicago. Jalen answered most of the questions correctly making him the “winner”. Before we ended our evening, we worshipped in song as Peter played on both piano and guitar to Amazing Grace. Mr. Walter prayed over us and asked God to bless us as we



continue our journey. To show our sincere gratitude, Amaya spoke on our behalf and xstold the couple how it is amazing to meet people who are generous in giving and how the last 2 days were a great time for everyone to bond because of their shared interest in what the city had to offer. We presented them with a thank you card signed from all of us. Brother Carl did the same thing and spoke on behalf of the Chaperones.

We ended the night with a short walk back to the hotel said our final goodbyes to Mr. Walter and prepared for our early morning departure to Sandusky, Ohio.

## **Day 10-Sandusky,Ohio**

Reporter: Amaya Wingfield and Caleb Smith

Devotion: Proverbs 9:17-18

Time Zone: Eastern

Today was devoted to travels. We left the Inn of Chicago at 8:03pm. 30 minutes later, we crossed the state border of Indiana. Mr. Wayne drove past Gary, Indiana where the famous Jackson Family lived. Because our hotel did not provided continental breakfast, we went to Christo's; a very nice restaurant with great hospitality. Christo's was located in La Pointe, Indiana. It was a very small town. We had a huge breakfast for a very low price. After breakfast, we headed towards Sandusky. We finally arrived at our hotel at 2:05pm. Shortly after, the group came back downstairs and we had dinner at Cracker Barrel.

## **Day 11-Buffalo, New York**

Reporters: Nia Boyd and Christopher Wiley

Devotion: Proverbs 10:1-7

We have left the hotel at 9:38. At 10:00 am, we stopped at the "Merry-Go-Round" museum for a tour. In 1920, the building was originally a post office. Due to new regulations they upgraded and moved to a different building. The Merry-Go-Round Museum sits a couple of blocks from Lake Erie, 1 of 5 Great Lakes in The United States. There are three different types carrousel Stander, Prancer, and Jumper. They also have dogs, tigers, horses, elephants and so much more. On the wall there was a collection of

stamps by Paul Calle. Paul Calle was known for excellent designs on stamps. The United States Postal Service released 40 of Calles designs. On his set of stamps, he used the Cedar Point's Kiddie land carousels; Gustav Denzel deer, Charles Loof's camel and goat, and Muller's king horse. With the help of new technology, people use brass wood to create horse carousels. Today in 2015, people still work on carousels either creating original work or restoring old pieces of work. Here at the Merry-Go-Round Museum, there are volunteers who come in and spend time creating original pieces and auction them off at different times of the year to continue to fund the educational program. Our tour guide was nice enough to let everyone on this tour ride on the "Merry Go Round." At 11:14 we left the museum to head to Niagara Falls, New York. 1 o'clock we rode through Cleveland Ohio where LeBron James plays basketball. At 3:02 we have reached Buffalo, New York. At 5:03 we have reached Niagara Falls. Around 5:30 we all sat down at tables to enjoy our meals at Chili's. After dinner we head to our hotel for a wonderful sleep.

## Day 12-Albany, New York

Reporters: Geovanny Martinez and Anthony Davis-Dolphin

Devotion: Proverbs 11

This morning we had a bad start. At 9:30am, we got on the bus and Pastor Carol asked who were the reporters. We completely forgot today was our day. Because we forgot about our responsibilities, we read the entire Proverbs 11 and gave a summary on it later in the day. But before that happened, we toured Niagara Falls.

We were scheduled to take a ride on Maid of the Mist, a boat that takes you as close as possible to the falls. However, due to high levels of the falls, it was deemed unsafe to ride the boat due to the possibility of losing control. There was a possibility that we may be able to board at noon, but because we had to be on the road soon we were not able stay long. Instead, we stayed at the top and enjoyed the view of the falls and Canada! We learned that the Niagara Falls was formed at the end of the Ice Age. There are 3 waterfalls; The Canadian "Horseshoe" Falls, The American Falls, and the Bridal Veil Falls collectively named Niagara Falls. It is located at the border of Ontario, Canada and New York, United States. The Niagara River is about 264,000 square miles long. Its heights ranges from 167-174 feet. In 1678 it was discovered by a European man by the name of Louis Hennepin. A rail system was put in during the 1800s so that visitors can come and tour. Niagara Falls had the largest hydroelectric generator station and it opened in 1895. The power plant only transmitted 100 yards, but in 1896 Nikola Tesla transmitted more electricity to run the power plant. The rapids above the Falls reach the maximum speed of 25 miles per hour. However, the fastest speed recorded had been 68 miles per hour. The Falls were formed as ice sheets began to melt in the basins of the Great Lakes. The water

flows into Niagara Falls from streams and rivers that empty into the Great Lakes. 1/5 of all the fresh water in the world can be found in Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake Superior, and Lake Erie.

After our visit, we had breakfast/lunch at IHOP. When we left IHOP, we made our way to the New York Capitol: Albany. We passed the time by watching the movie Big Fat Liar. A few hours later we arrived at the capitol building. In 1899, Theodore Roosevelt declared the New York State Capitol complete in 1899. It took 25 years and cost about \$25 million to build. Five architects worked on its design: Henry Richardson, Thomas Fuller, Isaac Perry, Leopold Eidlitz, and Phillip Hooker. The walls are 4-5 feet thick. Because electricity wasn't invented yet, heat was the only source of light. Due to a fire in 1911, the library along with many other rooms were lost. In front of the building was a statue of Phillip Henry Sheridan. He was the General of the United States Army when the capitol was built.

We left the capitol and got back on the interstate when we saw the historic Hudson River. The Hudson River is 315 miles long and it flows from North to South through Eastern New York. The river was explored by Henry Hudson in 1609. It was a major route for Native Americans and later Dutch and English settlers. The source of the river is originated from Lake Tears of the Clouds in Essex County, New York.

On our way to the hotel, the group dined at a small country family restaurant called "Grandmas Pies and Restaurant". It was a great choice as we were all satisfied. Tomorrow we are headed for Montpelier, Vermont.

## Day 13-Montpelier, VT

Reporters: Janell Gray and Malik McCullough

Devotion: Proverbs 12

It was raining today in Albany, New York, but it's the Fourth of July. Happy Independence Day! The first place we headed to was the Ben and Jerry's Factory in Vermont. Before we got to Vermont we drove through Whitehall, New York the birthplace of the U.S. Army. At 11:05, we crossed the state line of Vermont and stopped at a visitor's center. Everyone picked up a Ben and Jerry's Tour Brochure. It is safe to say that we were all excited about getting some ice cream. There are some interesting facts about Vermont. 14 million people visit each year. 1.3 million gallons of Maple Syrup was produced in 2014 and there is one cow for every 3.8 Vermonters. Thanks to Sister Joyce we read a book about Vermont and it informed us that the American Indians learned to make maple syrup by boiling tree sap. It takes about 40 grams of sap to make 1 gram of maple syrup; that is why pure syrup is so expensive. In autumn, people come to look at the brilliantly colored leaves on the trees (leaf peepers). One last fact

is that The Windsor covered bridge is 450 feet long and it connects Vermont to New Hampshire. It is the longest bridge in the country. We rode through Burlington, the largest city in Vermont. While passing through we witnessed a lot of people enjoying an Independence Day lunch in parking lots, grasses, and parks. When we drove into South Burlington, it looked the same.

At 1:32pm we arrived at Ben and Jerry's. As you drive on to the campus of Ben and Jerry's you can see cows both staring at us and eating grass. While we waited for our tour, there was stand that provided free Spin Art. We all took turns, some people liked there's, others didn't. As we made our way inside, there was a display case of euphoric flavors. The tour started at 2:10pm. First, we watched a video of how Ben and Jerry's came together. They went across the country in their cowmobile, but when coming back to Vermont, the car caught on fire 1986-1986. An interesting fact is that when they first made the vanilla ice cream, Jerry was the one who would taste the ice cream. He kept telling Ben it needed more vanilla but the problem was that he had a sinus problem and he couldn't taste the vanilla so the ice cream became too sweet, in the end, they kept it. In the next room was the actual factory where the ice cream was made. For each Ben and Jerry's factory built, they use premium cows within a 100-mile radius that does not have any GMO. Unfortunately, we were not able to see any ice cream being made because it was the weekend and a holiday. On the last leg of the tour, we were taken to the taste room/ packaging area. At the end of our tour, we received a sample cup of ice cream. The featured flavor of the day was "Spectacular Speculoos". It was a vanilla based ice cream that had ginger and sugar cookie. Some liked it, some didn't saying there was too much ginger. Our tour only lasted 30 minutes. We collected our spin art and returned to the bus. The next stop we headed to was the state capitol building of Vermont, which is Montpelier. We took a few group photos on the steps, and then Ms. Tinika took a photo of us in front of an old canon and a Statue of Thomas Chittenden-The First Governor of Vermont. Afterwards, we arrived at our hotel. It wasn't one of the best hotels we've stayed at. At 4:45pm we left to do our laundry. It took 3 ½ hours. Because Montpelier is a small city, everything was close by. We left the laundry place and had dinner right around the corner at Julio's (July's). Even though it was the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, we had Mexican food. It continued to rain after we left the restaurant and we concluded our evening turned in for the night. Tomorrow we are headed for Concord, New Hampshire.

## Day 14- Concord, New Hampshire

Reporters: Garin Gray and Dajha Belisle

Devotion: Proverbs 13

Today we all got up in Montpelier, Vermont well rested in the Eco Lodge Hotel. We had breakfast and went down to the bus by 10:00am. For devotion, Garin read Proverbs 13:1-2, Proverbs 13:10, and

Daijha said the prayer. After devotion, Pastor Carol made an announcement to all the students. She told us that for 30 minutes we had to get with our devotion partners and talk about ourselves and find out what they've disliked and liked about the trip so far. We got with our partners and the chatting among the students began. There was nothing but talking; no games no cellphones just good old-fashioned communication. Something we haven't done in a while. After the 30 minutes was up, Pastor Carol told us we had another assignment. On a piece of paper, we had to write what we liked and what we didn't like on the trip so far and to be completely honest. On the same sheet of paper, we were to write about what we were most excited to do for the next 30 minutes. At 11:11am we crossed over from Vermont into New Hampshire. At 11:15am, we stopped at the welcome center for New Hampshire to take a bathroom break. This was a different experience for us. We had porta potties to use and they were nasty. While we were getting ready to go into the welcome center, Sister Joyce came out with some pamphlets and told us that there were toilets inside, but like Pastor Carol said, it was still exciting. Afterwards we headed to the bus and as usual we did the count and continued our assignment for another 10 minutes. As she collected the papers, she noticed a drawing on Caleb's entry. It seems that we have more than one inspiring artist on the bus. After collecting all of the papers, we got back on our electronics and continued towards the capital. At 12:35pm, we arrived at the state capital building and took a picture. There was a sculpture of Daniel Webster who was elected New Hampshire congressman in 1813-1817. There was also a statue of John P. Hale the first anti-slavery U.S. Senator. After looking around a bit we discovered that this is the nations oldest state house in which the legislative still occupies its original chambers.

After leaving the capital building, we headed towards the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center. The Center is dedicated to an astronaut named Alan Shepard and Christa McAuliffe. Alan Sheppard commanded Apollo 14 and Crista McAuliffe was a school teacher who was selected out of 11,500 American civilians to go to space in 1985. That space shuttle was the Challenger that tragically exploded during the launch into space. We learned that the electromagnetic spectrum is made of waves categorized by frequency and wavelength. We also learned that minerals must occur naturally. They are inorganic substances meaning a living process doesn't form them. After we explored the museum, the group went in the big dome like auditorium. We learned about the nebulas in space and how they are made up of gas and dust. We also learned about was how Jupiter was discovered. It was discovered by a man named Galileo Galilei back in 1610. He was the first man who actually pointed a looking glass into the sky and saw three moons orbiting Jupiter. After the presentation, we all went upstairs and there were many activities like hula hooping, car racing and other things that showed us how gravity works. Once that was over, we went outside and waited for Pastor Carol and headed to the bus. By now we were pretty hungry so Pastor Carol explained that today we would be eating at Applebee's and all the kids over 12 would have a budget of \$10. At 4:06pm, we arrived at Applebee's. The service was slow but the food was good. When we went outside the boys and Maleah decided to play basketball in the parking lot and Anthony's desire to play basketball finally came true. After getting on the bus, Pastor Carol and the other chaperones went to Wal-Mart and left Garin in charge, so that there wont be any

arguing with the kids. After a long day we finally got to La Quinta Inn and Suites and checked in for the night.

## Day 15-Augusta, Maine

Reporters: Tony Taylor and Maleah McCullough

Devotion: Proverbs 14:1-3

This morning, we left our hotel at 9:00am. Tony read from Proverbs 14:1-3 for devotion and Maleah prayed for open minds and safe travel. Mr. Wayne continued on North Interstate 93 for Augusta, Maine. While headed to Maine, Auntie J (Sister Joyce) gave us her United States book and we learned that Maine is famous for their lobster. They are also famous for the multiple lighthouses and it's the "toothpick" capitol of the world due to their pine trees. Augusta has been Maine's capitol ever since 1827. At 10:17am, we crossed into the land of Maine. We stopped at the Welcome Center to walk around and saw different maps and pictures of Maine. After that, we got on the bus and made a surprise stop at Old Orchard Beach, a small amusement park that sits on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. Pastor Carol offered 3 choices of activities: riding the rollercoasters, walk around and shop, or go to the park and play basketball. Pastor chose 4 people to go play basketball; another group went shopping while the younger students got on the rollercoasters. There was something for everyone. Needless to say all of us had a great time. We left the park after 3 hours and arrived at Clambake Seafood Restaurant to eat our dinner. The portions were very large even for the kid's menu. There were a lot of fries left over that no one could eat and some of us went out the back of the restaurant where about 70 seagulls waited. The manager allowed us to throw it out to them seeing that the seagulls never leave. After our bellies were full, we returned to the bus and headed for the State Capitol Building in Augusta, Maine. We got to the building at 6:30PM to take a picture, and we also walked around for exercise. When we fully walked around the building, everyone got back on the bus and took a short ride to the hotel for the evening.

## Day 16-Boston, Massachusetts

Reporters: Jalen Carter and Michael Boyd

Devotion: Proverbs 16

At 7:30am, we left Maine for Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts. The featured dvd on the bus today was "Holes". At 9:22am we crossed back into New Hampshire heading to Massachusetts.

We arrived at Gordon College at 10:43am. Our hosts for the college tour were Mr. Stan and Mrs. Judy. We started the tour in Frost Hall, which is the administration building for the college. We waited in Frost hall, which was the original Estate of the College. It is the oldest building on campus and looks like a castle. Gordon College was founded in 1889 by Rev. Dr. Adoniram Judson (A. J.) Gordon. It was originally named the Boston Missionary Training School. We learned that there are two capes: Cape Cod and Cape Ann. The college is on Cape Ann. Our tour guides name was Mr. Shawn. We went into the Ken Olsen Science building. When we walked up the stairs and looked out the window we saw the Chapel and the Music Hall. The architect intentionally did this because he knew that Gordon College is a Christian Liberal Arts Institute and he wanted to make sure that as the students and faculty ascended the stairs they could see their beloved campus landmark. The school owns 250 acres of woods. Next we were taken to the Chapel which was erected in 1993. It seats 1,500 people and is used for Freshman Orientation. Students are sent to 35 countries for missionary work. At the end of the tour we were taken back to Frost Hall and given Gordon College shirts. We learned that Mr. Stan was a professor for 20 years in Social Science. Mrs. Judy provided lunch at Dane Street Beach in Beverly, Massachusetts. We had lobster rolls or turkey sandwich with a side of mixed fruit and desert. The view shows Beverly Bay that leads to the Atlantic Ocean. You can also see Salem at a distance and a few uninhabited islands.

Next, Mr. Stan and Mrs. Judy took us to the Wenham Museum. We saw a house that was 353 years old. It was built in 1662. The museum has a large collection of Dollhouses and train sets. In the pilgrim house, we saw how the colonist lived in a one-bedroom house with 6 kids. We saw and learned about all the different chores the family had to do. They let us see and feel what it was like to carry buckets of water. Each bucket contains 2 gallons of water and you need to get more than 10 gallons for your household. They could end up being up to 36 pounds. The one shown in the picture below is made for children. Before saying our goodbyes to Mr. Stan and Mrs. Judy, they were nice enough to give us gifts. We were given a map of Boston. The map also has pictures of some of the famous buildings we'll be seeing as we tour the city. Mrs. Judy also gave us some "Old Fashioned New England Salt Water Taffy". This was the first commercially sold candy in America. At 5:17pm, we arrived at the Capitol building in Boston. Shortly after, we picked up "Uncle Darrin" from a hotel near the airport. He will be with us for a while. We arrived at a restaurant called "99" for dinner and we ended the night at the Comfort Inn.

## **Day 17-Boston, Massachusetts (Day 2)**

Reporters: Amaya Wingfield and Caleb Smith

Devotion: Proverbs 16:16

This morning Caleb read devotion from Proverbs 16 and Amaya said our morning prayer. After that we entered into the city of Boston for a Duck Boat tour of the city and of the Charles River. The duck that we were on was called "The Miss Emma Science." The name of our duck driver was Captain P.J. Keen. The reason that was her name is because she likes to sleep a lot. She wears her pajamas to work. The Boston Duck Tour is a unique way of traveling around downtown Boston to look at historic sites and buildings of great importance. We passed the Holocaust Memorial, Trinity Church, the Old State House of Boston as well as the current State House, the Boston Public Library and more.

The Holocaust Memorial was dedicated on October 22, 1998. It is a memorial dedicated to the millions of Jews who lost their lives. There are 6 glass towers. On each tower are engraved names of those who died and those who survived. Next we passed Trinity Church. Its first standing building was destroyed in the Great Fire of Boston in 1872. Henry Hobson Richardson designed the 2nd building of the church. It was the official birthplace of "Richardson Romanesque" a unique architectural design that incorporates rounded arches over porch supports, entryways, or windows. Massive use of heavy masonry walls, usually rough-faced squared stone. Decorative wall patterns were achieved utilizing colors or textures of stone. The Boston Public Library was established in 1848 but the Act of the Great and General Country of Massachusetts. It was the first large free municipal library in the U.S. The old state capitol of Boston which sits in the middle of Downtown was built in 1713 by Robert Twelves. It was the seat of the Massachusetts General Court and is the oldest surviving public building in the U.S. The tour passed the current State House where a statue of Mary Dyer sits in the front of the building. Mary Dyer was a Quaker martyr who challenged the religious prosecution of Quaker in the American colonies in the 1600s. She and her husband William Dyer immigrated to Massachusetts from England in 1635. Later in 1650 she moved back to England. Because she ignored the warning of staying out of the colonies of Massachusetts and returned in 1660, she was hanged that same year on June 1. Before ending the tour, our wonderful "duck" turned from a land vehicle to a boat. We cruised along the Charles River where we saw from a distance Fenway Stadium where the Boston Red Sox play. We also learned that it is the longest river in the state. It divides the city of Cambridge and Boston. Charles River was well known for extremely high levels of pollution that was notarized by Bernard DeVoto in 1955. It was used as sewage dumps; industrial wastewater and urban runoffs also flowed into those waters from surrounding cities. Submerged cars and toxins also contributed by giving off pink and orange spots in the water. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency made a goal in 1995 to make the river swimmable by 2005. Christopher Swain became the first person to swim in the river in 2004. Maleah, Dajha, Christopher, and Michael got a chance to steer the boat while Captain P.J. "relaxed".

After the duck tours, we stopped by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to take our photo op. We walked into the institute in search of the library, which is the heart and the signature of the



Institute for its 75 foot rotunda. It is very historical and it has seen inaugurations of presidents, graduation ceremonies of students and is featured in many magazines and books. Next we roamed the hallways that showed interesting and interactive projects both former and current students have done. We learned about electricity and learned that if you connect a wheel together with a light and you spin the wheel as fast as you can, you will get a small spark. 20 minutes later we headed back to the bus for our next stop: Harvard University.

So far between Boston and Los Angeles, we think that Boston has the most traffic. While it was suppose to take no more than 20-25 minutes to get to Harvard, we got there closer to 40 minutes. Harvard University is the oldest institution in the U.S. The General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony established it in 1636. It was named after minister and 1<sup>st</sup> benefactor, John Harvard who left his library and half of his estate to the University upon his death in 1638. Today the University is one of the top institutions in the nation.

Our last stop was the Boston Tea Party Museum. It was very fun and interactive as the actors, dressed up to reenact this historic time. We were each given a card to describe the type of person we were, the men who were involved in the act of destroying the tea was an act of treason. They were known as the Sons of Liberty. Each of us got chance to reenact tossing tea crate into the water, from the restored ship "The Eleanor" just like Thomas Moore did on December 16, 1773. A "Mohawk" or feather was given to us as a way to identify with each other as Sons of Liberty. If you didn't have one, you were considered an imposter. We went below the deck of the boat to see what was in there. We saw a small treasure box, and where they would store the goods that were used in trading back then such as clothes, dry goods, money, and barrels of liquids, and tea from the East India Trading Company.

Then we went inside to look at a video about the Revolutionary War. The video was a hologram! I received a card that told me about Thomas Moore. Thomas Moore was an operator of the Boston Wharf before the Revolutionary war began. During the Boston Tea Party, he had to hide his identity, because throwing the tea into the harbor was illegal. If the British soldiers found out who he was he could have been sentenced to death for treason against King George of England, who was the ruler of the 13 colonies.

After a long day of walking and seeing the sights, we dined again at "99" where a kids meal was free due to the Red Sox winning the night before. This was Brother Carl's last meal with us because he was returning back home to L.A. first thing in the morning. On our ride to the hotel, the students gave reflections and thanks to him for his teachings. Michael prayed over Brother Carl for safe travels. Afterwards, Brother Carl gave a few remarks and told us how proud he was and that this trip was an experience of a lifetime. He said our final prayer and we departed with hugs and best wishes.

# Day 18-New Haven, Connecticut

Reporters: Nia Boyd and Christopher Wiley

Devotion: Proverbs 17:1-3

We left the Comfort Inn and Suites in Boston at 8:40am. At 9:17am, we crossed the Stateline of Massachusetts to Rhode Island. Rhode Island is about 37 miles wide and 48 miles long. It is the smallest of the 50 state of the in America. 9:20am, we reached Providence, Rhode Island. At 9:30am, the bus stopped at the Rhode Island State Capitol Building to take a group photo. The capitol building of Providence was designed by the architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White and constructed from 1895 to 1904. We left the capitol building around 9:53am and made our way to Hartford, Connecticut. At 11:00am, we crossed the state line into Connecticut. Then we crossed over the Thames River at 11:17am. 12:18pm, we entered Connecticut's capitol city, Hartford. It was built in 1872 and finished in 1879. The unique thing about Connecticut's capitol building is built in "East lake Movement" style. The exterior of the building is made of marble and granite. The marble came from East Canaan, Connecticut and the granite came from Westerly, Rhode Island. On the back of the building, there is a tympanum (a circular wall sculpture) carved into the door representing important people such as Thomas Hooker, John Winthrop and Roger Sherman. Their capitol has various statues for important unforgettable events that happened. At the capitol building, we saw the statue of Thomas Knowlton. When he was a boy, he served in many campaigns for the Indian and French War in 1762. He had an opportunity to command the troops of the Battle of Bunker Hill. Knowlton died in the Battle of Harlem Heights, September 16, 1776. He was only 36 years old. Next we saw a statue that represented men who died in military prison in Connecticut from 1861-1865. Next to the military prison is a statue of Clarence Ransom Edward. Clarence Ransom Edward led men of New England to fight for their victory of France from 1917-1918.

Across the street from the capitol building, there is a statue of a man on a horse by the name of Lafayette. Lafayette was a military officer and a French Aristocrat. He fought in the Revolutionary War and helped the American Colonist against the British. Lafayette was considered America's hero for helping Americans win the war. He died in Paris May 27, 1834.

At 3:30pm, we left our hotel dressed in formal clothes of black and white and headed for Yale University. At the concert hall, we met our hosts Mr. and Mrs. Adams. [The School of Music at Yale](#) gave us our own private show organized by Dean Robert Blocker. The music director of their music program, Mr. Rubin proudly presented his students, who played wonderful musical pieces. Every student on this tour got a chance to meet the young musicians who performed. At the end, Geovanny played 2 brief pieces with his viola. We were all very proud of him, as this was an experience of a

lifetime. Our private concert ended around 5:30pm and we headed downstairs, but not before receiving gifts from the Dean of Music and taking pictures. We walked a few short blocks to “The Study”, a chef owned restaurant. The dinner was very upscale and it was a good time to practice our etiquette. We had a 3-course meal that included ingredients that none of us heard about. Our plates were empty at the end of our dinner; a great sign that showed the food was great. Once we boarded the bus, Pastor informed us that the manager commended us for being on our best behavior. We behaved “better than most adults” at the restaurant. Fifteen minutes later we arrived at the hotel, excited about our big day with Mr. and Mrs. Adams.

## **Day 19- New Haven, Connecticut (Day 2)**

Reporter: Geovanny Martinez and Anthony Davis-Dolphin

Devotion: Proverbs 17

Today, we woke up at 7:10pm. The hotel rooms are huge! The room has 2 floors with one bedroom and bathroom on each floor. The hotel also had a kitchen, a living room and dinner table. The room was very comfortable. For breakfast, fruit, bagels, eggs and waffles were offered. Today was going to be a great day as Mr. and Mrs. Adams were hosting us at their home. They had a pool so we brought our swimwear and prepared for a very exciting day. But before leaving, we boarded the bus and did our devotion and prayer. Mr. Jason also joined us on our hour journey to the Adams’ home.

When we arrived, Mrs. Adams greeted us down the hill. She welcomed us to her 70.3 acre home they call Fern Hollow. The property featured a stream and enormous lake. We walked up the gravel hill to the home where we were met their private chef who would be cooking for us. We also met the family dog Bentley, along with friends of the Adams family who were excited to meet us. Mrs. Adams led us behind her house to give us a tour around her organic garden. She was growing, basil, carrots, corn, peppers, lavender, snap peas, lettuce, kale, and mint. We also visited a smaller garden that was growing blueberries, raspberries and blackberries. Next to the berry patch was a compost bin. The compost contains the greens and parts of the fruits and vegetables that were typically not used in cooking. Compost is important to organic gardening. It is a process that takes weeks or months to break down food waste. Once it is ready, it is put back into the soil to grow more healthy and vibrant fruits and vegetables. The younger kids stayed and harvest plants that will be a part of our lunch while the older kids returned to the front of the house to prepare salad dressing made from scratch. About 45 minutes later, everyone returned to the front of the house where the older kids were just finishing up the

vinaigrette dressing. Pastor Carol tried it and told us that she tasted the lemon that was added more than the generous amount but it was the best dressing she ever tasted.

We began to socialize with everyone and had chips and salsa with fresh home made organic strawberry lemonade. The students complimented the chef saying that the lemonade was the best lemonade ever! While lunch was being prepared, the kids rolled down the hill and we played “tag”. Even Bentley played fetch with the kids. We had the best day ever! Even one of chaperones decided to get in on the fun and roll down the hill with us. An hour later lunch was served. Coleslaw, burgers, potato salad, kabobs and a pesto pasta dish was on the menu. Everything was organic and delicious. Some of us went for seconds and thirds. With lunch finished, we continued to play with Bentley and played hide and seek. Geovanny entertained our hosts and chaperones by playing two brief pieces with his viola. As he played, the chefs brought out desert. There was mixed berry pie, brownie, peach berry pie served with ice cream. After desert we Mrs. Adams gave us a brief history of their home. The home was combined with 6 different houses from around the United States. One of the houses was belonged to Connecticut first pastor Warren Williams. Another part of the house was an old iron house built in 1640. One piece of the house was a barn and the other was a house that Warren Williams inherited from his Grandfather. The homes were brought up the hill piece by piece. When they reached the top, they put it back together “like a puzzle”. The chimney covers 4 floors in the house. The design included small windows to keep the heat insulated.

We took a hike on a steep hill up to the Adams weekend/summer home where the swimming pool was. The hike was about a mile long. The swim lasted for about 1 ½ hours and we concluded are very relaxing, well-deserved day. If you asked any of the students what was the best part of the trip, we would say spending the day at Mr. and Mrs. Adams’ home. Before we said out goodbyes, Mrs. Adams gifted all of us with a book called Omnivore’s Dilemma by Michael Pollan. Along with the book, we received a packet of vegetable seeds to grow at home as well as home made cookies. 20 minutes later we were all sleep on the bus after a very long and relaxing day.

## **Day 20- New Haven, Connecticut (Day 3)**

Reporter: Janell Gray

Our wonderful day started off with giving back to the less fortunate at a food pantry called “[Loaves & Fishes](#)” at The Episcopal Church of St. Paul. Our host, Mr. Jason, works there so we were invited to help. There were many jobs to do and one job was to help sort out clothes and make outfits. When we

were finished we came together in a big circle in the main room, where Jason introduced us to everyone. The Pastor of the church gave a prayer, and others added prayer requests and thanksgivings.

Some of us helped set up the arts & crafts areas for younger children, while others engaged in “hospitality” of passing out coffee, fresh fruit and pastries. Others assisted with a clothing boutique that gave away free clothes, and others worked in the line passing out food. Many of us were surprised to see so many people come in through the doors once they opened. There was a line around the block. Mr. Wayne and Anthony kept it under control as security. when all were fed and served, we cleaned up and came together again in a circle for a closing prayer. A woman named Anais told us about a study she was conducting for those with autism, and how she was able to find a family who could use the assistance the study provided. She told us of a young man who had autism, and his little sister, who was diagnosed with cancer at a young age, and was told that she would not have much more time to live past the age of three. By the grace of God she is now 6 years old!

In the final tally, we were able to serve over 280 people of New Haven!

After this we headed to the laundromat. Since some of us were getting hungry we walked across the street to Angelo’s Pizza to have sausage and pepperoni pizza.

Our next stop was back to Yale University for a campus tour guided by Mr. Jason. We saw the New Haven Green in Downtown New Haven. It was like a park with benches and grass to sit on. If you looked straight ahead you could see the library which is in an area called old campus, because many of the buildings are very old.

Yale University started in 1701 initially to train ministers and preachers. The library held rare documents therefore they had no windows because light can damage them. Mr. Jason told us that in his studies he was able to read through original slave narratives. Next we visited Yale Law School, which is the #1 Law school in the country (over Harvard!). Yale Law has produced a number of luminaries in law and politics, including U.S. Presidents Gerald Ford and Bill Clinton and many Supreme Court Justices. We later passed by the Graduate Students Hall and Morse College, where we heard a band rocking out in a restaurant. Morse college was established in 1961, and is where undergraduates reside and receive their liberal arts education. It is one of the 12 residential colleges at Yale. Morse College is an eclectic structure built on an odd, angular site with many design features that are reminiscent of the Tuscan Villages. Most of the buildings on the campus look like they are gothic in nature. We went over to the gymnasium, but couldn’t go inside since it was the weekend and was closed, so instead we walked over to the student store, but much of the items were too expensive for us! When everybody finished shopping, we looked down the way, and discovered another store selling Yale knick knacks and souvenirs. We surveyed the very unique coat of arms, or emblems of each of the colleges, both graduate and undergraduate that is at Yale.

As we were walking through New Haven, we found a place called Broadway Barber Shop that Anthony was able to get his hair cut at. While we were waiting for him, Mr. Jason showed us a really old, but historical church on the campus that is the oldest church in the area. It was an episcopalian church, which means that it advocates for church government by bishops. It is a famous church in New Haven. Our next stop was to the Afro-American Cultural Center which opened in 1969, after Black students and advocates petitioned for such a space dedicated to this demographic. AMong the founding members of the Black Student Alliance at Yale were Donald Ogitivie (c/o 1968), Armstead Robinson (c/o 1968), Glen DeChabert (c/o 1970), Woody Brittain (c/o 1970), Craig Foster (c/o 1969) and Randolph Dawson (c/o 1971). James Pennington, the first black pastor of New Haven's Dixwell Avenue Church was the first African American to take courses at Yale, so he could receive a ministerial license. Yale refused to allow Pennington to enroll in seminary, and even prohibited him from withdrawing books from the library. He couldn't ask or answer any questions and sat in the back of the classrooms for 3 years. Since they wouldn't let him get his degree, he went instead to Germany to obtain his Doctorate degree. There is no building on the Yale campus that honors Mr. Pennington, although after he passed away, he was awarded a degree.

Our last building was the University Art Gallery, founded in 1864. On the first floor, we saw ancient mediterranean sculptures, portraits, and old coins. When we were finished, we returned to the bus, and gave our goodbyes to Mr. Jason, as it was his last time with us. We prayed for him, and gave him thanks for the hospitality and friendship.

We returned back to the hotel early, which was good because we had a long day!

## Day 21- New York, New York

Reporters: Garin Grey & Daijha Belisle

Devotion: Proverbs 20:15 and 20:27.

Today was our last day at the Premiere Inn & Suites a. k. a our little house hotel. Which by the way is the best looking hotel we stayed in on the trip so far. By 8:45am we were all down at the bus.

For our devotion focus verse 15 was basically talking about how by following God's word and living by it his reward will be greater than anything on this earth can offer. For verse 27 it was saying that God knows everything about you even down to the number of hairs on your head. So since he made us they he knows everything about us and how we work. He knows our emotions and actions, so if you're lying, cheating, or having any hidden motives behind kind actions other humans won't tell, but God knows. After the devotion reading we gave prayer to keep us safe on the road and make it to our

destination. Since it's Sunday our first destination would be a church by the name of Black Rock Congregational Church. Our plan was to make it to the 10:00am service; this will be the first time that we will go to an actual church of worship since the tour began. We were invited by our hosts Mr. & Mrs. Adams, who are members. We also met Senior Pastor Steve Treash on Friday at Mr. & Mrs. Adams' home.

At 9:38am, we arrived at the church. The people were really friendly and each person at the door greeted us with a "Good Morning!" and a smile. We waited in the beautiful lobby, which had nice aquamarine colored chairs and beautiful cylinder shaped lights that filled the lobby. There was a little café that offered coffee and a guest reception center.

When we got inside we sang four songs before we sat down called "My Hope is Built on Happiness," "Hosanna in the Highest," "Your Love is Relentless," and "Amazing Grace." We all sang and clapped. The music was different than what some of us were used to at a Baptist church.

Musicians used drums, electric guitar, acoustic guitar, bass, and a keyboard. After the song, Pastor Steve introduced the new members to the church and brought them up to the stage. There was one couple that was of a different religion before they came, but now have given their lives to Jesus. After the introduction of the new members, we sang another song, and sat down for the message.

Pastor Steve began to tell us a story about him going to his normally busy barbershop one day, and how he was one step ahead of another customer from the parking lot to the door. Pastor Steve explained that he opened the door for this man, who took the first available chair! We thought this was very rude and discourteous of the man, and Pastor Steve explained his agitation at first because he felt like the man was treating him like a servant, even though he was there first.

He went on to explain how we are to love our enemies, as it reflects how our relationship with God is. He used the passage in Matthew 5:45, "Love your enemies that you may be children of your father in heaven." The pastor is basically saying that *God is Love*, so it is like him to shower blessings upon our enemies.

So we should in turn, show that we are God's children and grow to love like him.

The next thing he spoke about 4 different words for love used in the Greek language, one of them being "Agape." Love is not a set of emotions; it is Christ-like action emerging from Christ-like attitudes. He reminded us that Jesus is a man who showers love on even those who do not deserve it. We as humans don't deserve his love, but he gives it to us anyway because his love is Agape love.

Pastor Steve taught us about the rewards of loving our enemies. It will free us from the eternal pain of bitterness and anger, satisfaction of seeing evil defeated and lives transformed by our attitudes and actions and the joy of being a channel of God's supernatural Agape love. Pastor Steve would eventually get back to his barbershop story, and told us that despite the man's actions, he decided to serve and show him love by giving the man some coffee.

After that we prayed and concluded the service. Outside we snacked on some cookies and met a member named Mr. Aaron, who is a professional trumpet player and professor at Julliard. After that we met Pastor Steve's wife Mrs. Jen Treash, who told us that we were to spend time at her house, to our excitement! We knew how much fun we had the last time we spent time at someone's house. After meeting them, we all went into the prayer room to hold hands and receive blessings from the associate Pastors.

Afterwards we said our goodbyes to the friendly church people and journeyed to the Pastor's home, arriving at 12:20pm we finally arrived. It was really beautiful. We prayed over the food, and ate outside.

Caileigh, Pastor Steve and Mrs. Treash's daughter played badminton with us, while others played on a trampoline and tetherball. Inside you could play PlayStation 3 or air hockey. If you weren't interested in playing anything, you could just lie in a hammock and relax. We were having so much fun, that when it was time to go we were all a bit disappointed, and did not want to leave!

We all had some cupcakes for dessert and had a departing prayer given by Caileigh, Pastor Steve and Mrs. Adams, and took a photo together.

After getting back on the road, we arrived in the state of New York at 2:44pm on the way to West Point, and we went through the Harvard Black Rock Forest. We continued to drive until we reached the lonesome gate at 3:46pm. It turns out that when we pulled up, we had gone the wrong way, and made a U-turn back around. At 3:56pm we arrived at the Pershing Visitor Center, where Pastor Carol informed us that we only had 30 minutes before the center closed, so we had to be quick. When we finally got to West Point, we used the restroom and of course visited the gift shop, that had several overpriced items such as a simple mole-skin notebook going for \$50.

We learned that West Point was originally created as a strategic barrier to British offenses during the Revolutionary War. In 1802, President Thomas Jefferson led the creation of the United States Military Academy (which is West Point's official name) to train soldiers and cadets in artillery and engineering. The effort has proved to be necessary for the largest armies yet seen in America. Graduates from West Point would command on both sides for every major battle of the Civil War. After the Civil War, West Point continues to produce the majority of the army's new lieutenants, some of them African Americans, the first being Cadet Henry O. Flipper. He endured a great deal of discrimination, but pulled through and graduated in 1877.



It takes a lot to get admitted into the school, taking 60% of academic rigor, 30% leadership and 10% physical capability, with a recommendation from a Congressional Representative or the President.

After taking a photo, at 4:52p we left. At 6:19pm, we arrived in The Bronx, in New York City! We learned about a man named Robert Moses who wasn't a very nice man, and in the 1960s, built a freeway right in the middle of a thriving community. When the freeway was built it ripped the community in half. His purpose for the freeway was to build it to go straight through to the suburbs. Since the freeway was built, the poor people were left with no means of escaping. De-industrialization contributed to more poverty, alongside slumlords setting arson to apartment buildings to claim insurance money. The only good thing that came out of this was the creation of Hip Hop, which the community created as a means to combat gang activity and crime, and allow for children to be better engaged by bringing in positive activities.

At 7:35pm we all went down to the bus. Being in New York City was something very new to a majority of us. It had very crowded sidewalks and there were all kinds of people around. Mr. Wayne dropped us near the subway station, and we were going to take the "E" train all the way to Times Square.

The subways were a new experience. We all got our subway passes we put them straight into our wallets so we wouldn't bend them. We sat on the train for 15 stops, it was going stopping locally, so it took about 45 minutes until we finally got to Times Square. It was everything we imagined it to be – bright lights and crowds of people.

On the way to eat we saw some of Mr. Darrin's friends, who joined us for dinner at Dallas BBQ's on 42<sup>nd</sup> St. The proportions of the food were very big, so some of the students and chaperones were in for a surprise when their food got to the table. After a night of exploring the city, we headed back to the subway station. Several of the students fell asleep because they had the "itis," and we took a picture for evidence. On the train, we also met this guy who looked exactly like Mr. Jason, our tour guide from Yale. He had a suitcase a performed a ventriloquist routine with a little girl puppet, a weasel, and a creepy grandpa puppet.

After the long ride, Mr. Wayne picked us up, and we got back to the hotel at late. We all went into our hotel room and fell asleep from a very exhausting but fun-filled day.

## **Day 22- New York, New York (Day 2)**

Reporters: Tony Taylor & Maleah McCollough

## Devotion: Proverbs 21

After breakfast this morning we boarded the bus and had devotion and prayer. Then we got on the road, headed to the Sutphin Ave MTA train station. Mr. Darrin took some of us to fix our MTA Metro cards. We hopped on the Manhattan bound “E” train that took us all the way to the World Trade Center. Mr. David, Anthony’s dad joined us for the day, and told us that the new World Trade Center (WTC) was built in about 6-7 years and is now one of the tallest buildings in the world (now it is the tallest building in the Western Hemisphere).

When we arrived at the station, we exited, and walked across the plaza to see the site where the twin towers used to stand. There were two memorials dedicated to the people who died on 9/11. We entered in to the building and greeted a very nice lady that led us to get our tickets to the observation floor. All of us went through security and waited in line to get on the elevator.

The elevator had tv screens from the floor to the ceiling that shows a time lapse of New York City’s growth from when it was settled to now. The elevator was fast, and seeing the time lapse showed us how the city began to build up in the 1900s, every second was like a time lapse of one year.

The observatory was on the 103<sup>rd</sup> floor and had a great view of Manhattan, New Jersey, the Statue of Liberty and the Brooklyn Bridge. We stayed on the same floor for about 30 minutes. After leaving, we got another view of the World Trade Center Memorial, and read some of the names of those who died in Flight 93 and of First Responders like Firefighters who died trying to save others.

We got back on the subway, and took the “R” train “Uptown” towards New York University, where Mr. Darrin graduated. We exited at the “8<sup>th</sup> St” station and walked towards campus, where Mr. Darrin showed us NYU’s chemistry building called the “Brown Building.” This building is significant because it was the location of the “Triangle Shirtwaist Factory” Disaster in 1911, where 146 women workers died due to a fire that started on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor. There weren’t any labor laws back then that gave workers rights, and at the time, the women workers were locked inside of the factory so they could produce more and work harder without taking a break. When a fire started one day, the workers couldn’t escape, so many jumped out of the 10<sup>th</sup> floor window to prevent themselves from burning to death, but many died when they hit the sidewalk.

Across the street, we visited the NYU Academic Resource Center, where we met the Dean of Diversity of the College of Arts & Sciences, Ms. Fatiah Touray. She is also the Director of the Academic Achievement Program (AAP), which Mr. Darrin was involved in all four years he attended the school. She told us that the program was created to help African-American, Latino and Native American students at the school. She told us that even she was involved in the program when she attended the University. We met a student named Ms. Ari, who was President of the Black Students Union on Campus, and the Assistant Director of AAP named Ms. Bush. She took us across the street to another

large building, to the 9<sup>th</sup> floor where we sat down and met with the Dean of Students of the College of Arts and Sciences who welcomed us, and gave us an NYU charger for us to keep as a present. He asked us if any of us were thinking about coming to NYU for school, and a majority of us raised our hands high!

We left and went to another building, called the Kimmel Center, where we went to the 7<sup>th</sup> floor to get a great view of Washington Square Park and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. After this we thanked Ms. Touray and said goodbye.

We stopped for a bite to eat on the way to Union Square, where Mr. Darrin showed us where he used to live. Union Square is important to New York City because it is where a lot of rallies and protests take place, like the Trayvon Martin Rally a few years ago. We got on the subway station at Union Square and took the “Q” train to Times Square again, so that Nia could visit the Toy’s R’ Us store, a few of us went with Mr. David to get honey roasted almonds and peanuts. Mr. Darrin then took us to Columbus Circle and Central park using the “1” train.

We had to walk a few blocks up to another train station, and we passed Lincoln Center, which is similar to the Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles. We then took the “2” train to Harlem, and got off at 125<sup>th</sup> Street.

In Harlem there were a lot of people on the street, and there were many different stores and vendors who were selling things like sunglasses, incense and oils. We then saw the world famous Apollo Theater. Many R&B and Blues singers have performed there, and we were able to see and touch the famous log from the tree of hope. The tree of hope is a tree that would give someone luck to do something good. Every person that did not rub the tree of hope and performed onstage afterward, were boo’d off stage. We left the Apollo and walked to the “A” train where we traveled and transferred back to the “E” train where we went back to Queens to get picked up by Mr. Wayne.

## Day 23- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Reporters: Jalen Carter & Michael Boyd

Devotion: Proverbs 22:1-4

Today is the day we leave New York. Even though in New York there is a lot to see, learn, and eat. I would still prefer L.A for its more colorful and vibrant lifestyle. I’m also not too keen on the fast moving lifestyle. I’ve seen more people cross the crosswalk on red more here than anywhere in the country. Tony was lucky someone stopped him before following a man who was crossing on a red light and was

almost hit by an oncoming car. I guess the New York life just isn't for me. Pastor Carol is having us catch up on our journals until we get to Princeton.

Today we will be going to Princeton University, the Liberty Bell, and the capital of New Jersey, which is Trenton. At 9:00a.m we passed the Barclays Center where the Brooklyn Nets play. They were working on the roof of the building. They are constructing a green roof. It is supposed to be a sound muffler for the stadium's games and concerts. It is being built to give residents a more pleasurable experience. We passed the Queen Mary II which is the only transit liner that goes from the East Coast of the U.S to England. While on the highway we saw the Statue of Liberty. We went on the Verrazano Bridge to Staten Island. At 9:58a.m we entered New Jersey's pollution in the bus.

We stopped at a rest stop/gas station to refill the bus. Meanwhile, Pastor Carol had us go to the restroom at the gas station store she gave us a \$10 budget to buy something from the store. I despise the New Jersey accent. It's like they took the New York accent and took out the charm they have. The two cashiers where loud and annoying. They struck up a long conversation about Tony's Doritos Dynamites. When we started our journey again it started to pour rain as we travel to Princeton. We entered the town of Princeton that was settled in 1683. Princeton isn't just a college there was a Princeton Elementary School.

We didn't explore the Princeton campus because it is to complex to get parking so instead we'll go to the capital of New Jersey. Princeton has a lot of stone gothic buildings. We left Princeton and it is pouring hard so hard you can hear the drops on the roof as we're driving. You can never predict the weather here on the east coast. It is raining so hard that you can't see out the windows. We have to take a picture from the bus because of the rain we will not be taking a photo in front the capital building. As I look outside most buildings are damaged and boarded. We are headed to Pennsylvania and are leaving New Jersey.

This experience in New Jersey was horrid. I feel like this has been the worse state on the trip so far. We just passed a bridge that said "Trenton makes the world takes." I don't think I've ever seen something made or come from Trenton, New Jersey in my life. I woke up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. We are here to see the Liberty Bell. We read wall talking about the Executive Branch. In 1790 the federal government moved from New York to Philadelphia. There were debates on where the nation's capital would be which contributed to the divide of North and South.

For 10 years Philadelphia was the nation's capital until they reached an agreement on Washington, D.C. The huge crack in the Liberty Bell was made while they tried to repair it in 1846. The Liberty Bell got its name from abolitionist who used it as a symbol for why they should free slaves. We are going to Independence Hall while waiting in hot humid weather.

We learned about the Articles of Confederation, The Declaration of Independence, and The Constitution. We also learned about their courtroom and where certain people and places were. The defendant would stand in a cage called the dock. Lawyers would sit at one table together as the trial went on. We found out that there were two Declaration of Independences. The first one Thomas Jefferson wrote was rejected by the people. So he had to change it and write another one. One sentence survived and is still used today. ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL! Next we went to Congress Hall where the House of Representatives sat. We had the pleasure of sitting where they sat.

Next we went into a area were there was a desk in the middle, but way in the back. During an argument between senators Ben Franklin to the chair and said "I'm not sure if that sun is setting or rising!" After the argument was settled he finally said "I now know that that sun is rising!" We ate dinner at Champps restaurant for tonight's meal. We ended the humid day in the Hampton Inn.

## Day 24- King of Prussia, Pennsylvania

Reporters: Amaya Wingfield and Caleb Smith

Devotion: Proverbs 23

This morning we left the hotel at 9:43am. At 10:00am we arrived at the Valley Forge Visitors Center. In Valley Forge, the soldiers known as the Continental Army were put into groups of 12 to make their own housing. It was also a way to keep warm from all the work. Many of them were close to naked or didn't have shoes. Since every squad was different so was every cabin. George Washington was the Commander in Chief and Major General of the Army. Out of all the regiments, North Carolina had it the worst. They had the least amount of supplies. During their placement at camp, it rained and stormed often. Many grew tired of the constant routine. The more cabins they had to make, the further the trips they made to get wood.

The food was mostly corn, whiskey and wheat. There was a market in the camp but it was often hard to purchase food or clothes unless you had money. Sometimes they went weeks without any meat. Due to the unfortunate circumstances, many died of pneumonia, diarrhea, and smallpox. There was a hospital that was setup not too far from the campus.

2,000+ died by the summer of 1770. For every man that died in the war, 10 died because of disease. Spring came as a new beginning. It gave soldiers a sense of hope. Also due to the warming of the

weather, new soldiers came in. There were fewer diseases to spread and more food new clothes became available. With the alliance from France, the soldiers grew with more help.

Baron von Struben trained all the new soldiers to make them better during the summer of 1781. The encampment was placed at the top of a hill so that it easy to be ready for surprise the enemy. During the war, the soldiers were expected to receive \$6. Unfortunately, they never saw the money until after the war along with an extra \$2. Many of them got mites. To stop them they got sulfur, brimstone, tallow, and whiskey. In September 18, 1777 British attacked the forge.

As we traveled further into the campus we saw George Washington's original home. The house has a total of 3 levels: the stairs and banisters haven't had any work done to them One of the only things they changed was the floor. Close to 30 people lived and worked in the house. Washington's home served as the Pentagon. On the very top level of the house, there is a Garret. A Garret is additional housing for the other inhabitants such as servants, maids and slaves. After we left Washington home, we drove about 45 minutes to Lancaster County to watch a play called Joseph.

Joseph was a musical produced at The Sight and Sound Theatre where their motto is "Where the Bible Comes to Life". Joseph, the son of Jacob is the second to youngest son out of 13 boys. Everyone in the family knows that Joseph is the favorite because of the many dreams that God has shown him. He explains that in every dream he is above the stars and everyone bows to him. His brothers resent him and accuse him of being the "better one". In a moment of greed, they sell their brother to the Potiphar and he is taken to Egypt. For the next 10 years he becomes accustomed to the life and goes through many ups and downs. Because of his continuous faith in God, he becomes one of the most powerful leaders in the land of Egypt and during the time of the 7 year famine that was promised by God, he leads he continues to feed his people and their family along with providing goods to those who live in villages near by. In the end his dreams do comes true because of his unbreakable faith in the Lord.

Message from the play:

Amaya: If you always believe in God and what he can do for you, he will deliver you from all troubles and evils.

Caleb: Do not brag or to not sleep on your job.

The original sight and sound is in Lancaster County by Glenn and Shirley Eshelman. They also have two other facilities in , Pennsylvania and Branson, Missouri. Sight and Sound was founded in the summer of 1976. In the beginning, they produced shows at Lancaster Bible College. July 1976 Sight and Sound had their first show of "Land of Our Own". In 1991 the Sight and Sound Entertainment Centre moved to a bigger facility. After the premier run of "Noah and the Miracle of Christmas" The Entertainment Center burned. All of their equipment and the stage were lost. Thankfully, no one was harmed. On

September 1, 1998 Sight and Sound Theatre reopened. It featured 2000 seats and a 300-foot stage that wraps around the stage on three sides.

## Day 25- Washington, D.C.

Reporter: Nia Boyd

Devotion: Proverbs 24

Everyone has eaten breakfast before the time of 7:45am. At 7:59am, we left hotel of “Hampton Inn & Suites” in the city of King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. We were on our way to Washington D.C for 5 days. At 9:06am, we stopped at Delaware’s rest stop. For your information, the Capitol of Delaware is Dover. We left the rest stop at 9:21am to continue our drive to Washington D.C. A couple minutes after driving out from Delaware, the bus drove through Maryland at 9:27am. The capitol of Maryland is Annapolis. 10:38am, we stopped at a rest stop in Maryland and headed back onto the road at 10:57am. Around 11:30am, we entered Washington, D.C. We picked up Ms. Bridges from a bus stop at the “National Air and Space” museum at 11:42am. We arrived at the Supreme Court at 12:05pm.

The Supreme Court was built in October 7, 1935. The first order of business contained 114 attorneys including 10 women. Today’s Supreme Court members are; Justice Scalia; Justice Kennedy; Justice Thomas; Justice Ginsburg; Justice Breyer; Justice Kagan; Justice Alito; Justice Sotomayor; and Chief Justice Roberts. All nine justices are in term infinity. We walked passed the Library of Congress at 12:34pm.

At 12:45pm we settled in the “Rayburn Office Building” to meet Congresswoman Maxine Waters. We met in her office building on the second floor of room 2221. Maxine Waters is a Representative of the South Central Los Angeles District and has been in office since 1990. Currently, she is the ranking member of the House Committee on Financial Services, which covers regulations on financial issues such as banking, consumer protection, and Wall Street. With this title, she has an additional 30 staff members are working under her. The Congresswoman told us that she is currently working on legislation to address payday loans within our community, which get people into a cycle of debt that is hard to get out of. Pastor Carol informed her of the many details of the trip, including journaling, to which she gave insight that it is important, and that Oprah Winfrey probably would not have been as successful as she is today, if she had not journaled every day. Everyone got to greet Mrs. Waters and Pastor Shane Scott visited along with us from Macedonia Baptist Church located in L.A. WE got a chance to meet the Congresswoman’s staff, who presented us with a package containing significant items, such as a copy of the U.S. Constitution, pens, a calendar, notepad, and other items that we were grateful for.

Around 2:15pm, we walked around the grounds of the U.S state Capitol. Washington's state Capitol is under construction. It is the first time that the Capitol is upgraded since 150 years. Construction workers have been working on it for 3 years. 2:30pm we walked inside to head to the top floor of the House Chamber. The House Chamber opened in the year of 1857. There are 435 House of Representatives in office today. In that specific chamber, bills are introduced, and voted in there as well as the President's State of Union address, electoral votes, joint meetings and sessions are held. Republicans sit on the right and the Democrats sit on the left. The Chamber is open to the press and the public and they sit up and witness in the balcony. The First Family also sits up in the balcony to watch the Presidential speech. After visiting the House Chamber, we walked to the other side of the capitol building into the Senate Chamber and witnessed members of the Senate in session. On the Senate floor there are; President Officer; Sergeant at Arms; Journal Clerk; Parliamentarian; Legislature Clerk, Assistant Secretary of the Senate and Secretary of the Senate; Assistant Democratic and Republican Secretary; Democratic and Republic Secretary staffs; Democratic and Republican whips; Democratic and Republican leaders; and at last Senate Pages. Lots of Debates happen in the Senate chamber. The President from the White House is not involved in the Senate Chamber. There are more than 100 desks for each Senator. In fact, there are 100 senators in office in 2015.

At 3:55pm, we walked back to the bus to head to dinner. On our way to dinner, we saw Arlington's Pentagon at 4:20pm. The Pentagon is 6.6 million square feet and one of the world's largest office buildings. It is the headquarters of United States Department of Defense. Since Washington D.C is not to far from Virginia, we crossed into Arlington at 4:25pm. The Capitol of Virginia is Richmond. We stopped at "Pentagon Mall" to eat dinner at "Harry's." Since Ms. Bridges gave the entire students "Table Manners" guide, it was a struggle for all of us. After a long day of learning about U.S Political history, everyone settle in "Hampton Inn" to have a wonderful beauty sleep.

## **Day 26- Washington, D.C. (Day 2)**

Reporters: Anthony Davis & Geovanny Martinez

Devotion: Proverbs 25

Today, we boarded the bus at 8am. Today, Anthony read devotion from Proverbs 25, followed by prayer from Geovanny. From the hotel, we went to pick up our host, Ms. Bridges. On our to the Embassy of Ghana, we were caught in rush hour traffic in the morning. We crossed over the Potomac River. To the west of the river was Arlington, Virginia. To the east of the river was the District of Columbia. The Potomac River is the fourth largest river along the Atlantic coast. George Washington chose to establish the nation's capital along the Potomac River because it included two major ports:



Alexandria and Georgetown. Potomac River played as a main source of water for Washington D.C, in the opening of the Washington Aqueduct in 1864.

We saw the original Wells Fargo wagon in the window of the bank. It had gold wheels and gold writing on the wagon. Then, we passed the National City Christian Church and the Luther Place Memorial Church. On the top of the National City Christian Church had Ephesians 2:20- *“Together, we are his house built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. And the cornerstone of Christ Jesus himself.”* In front of the National City Christian Church was a statue of Major General George Thomas. Major General George was a Union army general. He won one of the first major battle in the Civil War, the Battle of Mill Springs. Then, we passed the statue of Hahnemann. Samuel Hahnemann was the founder of Homeopathy and a German physician. Also, we drove past the Washington Hilton Hotel where someone attempted to assassinate President Ronald Reagan during his first term. We passed the Embassies of Israel, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, and others.

At the Ghanaian Embassy, the Director of Information named Mr. Jojo welcomed us to the Embassy of Ghana. He was the ambassador’s assistant. We learned that Ghana gained their independence in 1957 from the United Kingdom following mounting pressure from the territory that demanded sovereignty. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah was the leader of the independence movement and the first president who was successful in achieving independence. Ghana was the first country in Africa to achieve independence from the European colonial powers. This later led to other African countries that were colonized to achieve independence soon after. To the United Kingdom, Ghana was known as the “Gold Coast” state, because the country was plentiful in gold and other natural resources. After independence, they chose the name Ghana for the country.

In Ghana, they have Parliament and the President. The president serves 4 years, and the Parliament can serve all of their life. It was interesting because Mr. Darrin studied in Ghana for a semester in college. The Ghanaian flag has the three stripes; red, yellow, and green, and one star in the middle of the flag. The red represents the blood the Ghanaians shed for their independence. The yellow represents the gold in Ghana. The green represents the agriculture in Ghana. The star symbolizes that Ghana thinks they are the star of Africa.

Ghana use to have everything they have grown in their country, as Dr. Nkrumah tried to make the nation an industrial power. However, they now they import 80% of their needs because of years of political instability. Kwame Nkrumah was overthrown in 1966 by a military coup d’état, that was partially funded by the CIA. The country was controlled by the military for years. In 1979, a Lieutenant by the name of John Rawlings lined the generals up and killed them because they were no good for the country and abused their power. After controlling the country, he helped the country develop a democratic system with a new constitution in 1992. They speak English and Twi. For each person there is a name for each day a person was born.

Next, we went to meet the Chaplain of the Senate, Barry Black. On our way to meet him, we saw the Federal Bureau Investigation headquarters. Barry Black was the first Black chaplain of the Senate, and the 62<sup>nd</sup> chaplain of the U.S. Senate. Before serving as chaplain of the senate, he served as and Admiral Chaplain in the United States Navy. He has been serving as chaplain since 2003. He is 57 years old and has 2 kids. As a child he was raised in Baltimore and went to Christian schools since preschool to high school. To be the Chaplain, there are 100 people interviewed then to 10 then to 2 and they pick the top person. He prayed for us and reviewed two verses Ephesians 3:20 and Jeremiah 29:14. Ephesians 3:20- *Now all the glory of god, who is saw through.*

After we left the U.S. capitol with Barry Black, we went to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. When we entered the building, we saw the flags of all the states and territory of the United States. The Performing Arts Center was named after John F. Kennedy because Kennedy enjoyed performing arts, and he died before the building was built and the U.S. wanted to honor him. The Performing Arts Center was unique because many countries gave gifts to the United States to honor Kennedy and to put in the Performing Arts Center. Italy sent over 30 tons of marble, mirrors from Germany; chandeliers from the Swiss, and many more. We visited the Eisenhower Theater and the Opera Center in the Performing Arts Center, they hold about 2,000 people in 1 theatre.

Also, we saw the Presidential box where the president of the United States attends musicals, plays, operas, and more. When the president goes to the president's box the white house hangs the President's seal. They had Chinese, Russian, and African style lounges which donors are allowed to go in. The lounges rank from \$102 to \$1,200 yearly. There are 3 buildings combined into 1 whole building and 11 halls. We went to the national hall where all the flags of the countries that have diplomatic relations with. We go to the roof and see D.C. and the points of interest in D.C.

Following the Performing Arts center, we went to the Martin Luther King Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, Vietnam War Memorial, and the Korean War Memorial. The MLK memorial had many quotes by Martin Luther King. Each quote shows the place where MLK spoke the quote. There was a rock split that lead to the statue. On the side of the statue it said *out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope.* The statue was of MLK looking to the sky with his arms crossed.

Next, we went to the Lincoln Memorial, and took group pictures in front of the statue of Abraham Lincoln. In January 1863, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation to free slaves within the states in rebellion during the civil war. John Wilkes Booth assassinated Abraham on April 15, 1865.

Then we went to the Vietnam memorial where they have all the names of people who died in the Vietnam War. There are no veterans buried here. There are books where people who know a person who died in the war to see their name by knowing where to look. The Vietnam War lasted about 15

years and over time people got tired of it. President Kennedy started the war by sending army advisors to scout Vietnam and President Johnson and Nixon escalated the war. Many Americans were drafted to fight in the war.

The last stop on the national mall was the Korean War Memorial. At the Korean Memorial, there was pictures on the walls of people who died in the Korean War. Also, it was an area where it was statues of American soldiers with jackets in the jungle. The Korean war was similar to the Vietnam war, in that America fought in countries that were experiencing civil war.

After a long day in Washington, we ate dinner at Champps.

## Day 27- Baltimore, Maryland

Reporter: Janell Gray

Devotion: Proverbs 26

Today we are heading to see some wonderful sites in Baltimore, Maryland. We left at 8:05am heading to pick up Ms. Bridges. We are going to be exploring the city of Baltimore and meeting our host Pastor Russell and Carolyn Harris. We arrived at Full Joy Christian Ministry and met some of the people who attend the church. Pastor Carolyn gave us a welcome even though her husband Pastor Russell would join us later. She gave Pastor Carol a basket of fruit, which was really generous because Pastor Carol shared it with all of us! They gave the chaperones and students bag of goodies for our welcome. To end our greeting Pastor Carol said a prayer and we took a picture then boarded the bus.

On our way to the National Blacks in Wax Museum we saw some stores that were burned down during the protest of the Baltimore Riots. We also noticed the many vacant row houses that were through the neighborhoods we drove through.

When we arrived at the museum we had to wait a couple of minutes to get in since there were many large groups inside. Our tour guide Ms. Ola was telling us that a couple named Dr. Martin and Mrs. Martin had an idea on how to make these history books come to life. When they went to Egypt they saw wax so that inspired them to create African-American history in wax. They wanted people to learn about how we came up going through all the hardships and how we got through it.

We walked upstairs and the first wax person that caught my attention was a KKK member. In front of him were two little kids holding a sign saying "We Are Not Afraid." Seeing it confirmed to us that

together, we are not afraid of antagonism against us because we are better than all the hatred they may throw at us.

They had a wax figure of a boy who was chained, and had needles and a wolf coming out his arm. It was suppose to represent drug abuse and how it makes us as Black people go crazy. There was a fact given that more than 15% of drug users in America are African-American.

One story that was really emotional was a story about a boy who was taken captive from Africa and kept in a cage with monkeys in the Bronx Zoo in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Preachers and ministers in the community protested, so the zoo released him, not back to Africa though. Since they treated him like an animal he later got depressed and committed suicide. We also saw a lynching exhibit where the slave master would lynch the slaves.

A man demanded pay for his work but his boss didn't think that it was in his as a Black man to ask a white man in such a way. His pregnant wife found out that he was lynched and castrated so she went around town and told people of the horrific tragedy. In retaliation of the woman's protest, she was soon kidnapped, skinned, lynched and burned. Because she was 7 months pregnant, the mob that lynched her, cut her stomach open. They felt the baby kicking so they cut it out and smashed the baby's head to kill it. The mob wasn't satisfied, and to have "fun" they decided to put two cats into her stomach, to see which one would claw out first. It was really disturbing to learn this; it was probably the most disturbing story to hear about.

## **Advisory: GRAPHIC IMAGES BELOW**

Walter White posed as a white man to preserve his safety as a civil rights investigator for the NAACP in the South. He directed a broad program of legal challenges to segregation and disfranchisement. Even though there were many sad but interesting stories that were told it shows we have fought and overcome oppression and how we are still alive today.

Moving on to other exhibits, we saw great artists like Langston Hughes, Marcus Garvey, Rosa Parks, Mae Jemison, Frederick Douglass, Thurgood Marshall, Martin Luther King, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Madam C.J. Walker, Nefertiti in their wax likeness. All these people had a wax made of them because they are important and they paved a way for our freedom.

When we left the museum we saw more sights within the city such as Baltimore City Hall and a Holocaust Memorial as we headed to Golden Corral. We ate till our bellies got full and then parted our ways with the church group. While driving to drop-off Ms. Bridges we went over the answers from our test of the three branches of government and of the major rivers and mountains in the world. We aced it with 100%.

We dropped her off then headed to the hotel to get our beauty nap.

## Day 28- Washington, D.C. (Day 4)

Reporters: Garin Grey & Daijha Belisle

Devotion: Proverbs 27: 1-2

Today we all got up well rested in our second to last day Arlington, Virginia. Today for devotion we mixed it up and we switched roles as Daijha read Proverbs 27: 1-2. Verses 1-2 basically says not to be vain and instead have others worship you. Also to not love yourself more than God and put your needs and wants over the ones given to us. You do not know what may happen tomorrow, a family member may die or something else may happen, so be alert and concentrate on today.

Also, it is important not to brag and let someone else talk about you, because God doesn't like it if you just talk about yourself, Garin then prayed over us to stay safe on the road and for all the laundry equipment to stay functional as we wash our clothes. Today we went to church at Arlington Community Church, where Ms. Bridges is a member and keyboardist.

We arrived 9:32 am where we were greeted with smiles and handshakes by all of the church members. At the start of the church we sang three songs, one of them was called "You Make Beautiful Things." After the songs Pastor John Eckrote had Ms. Bridges introduce us to the congregation and she told them what the goal of Eagle Empowerment was. After that Pastor John had the congregation pray for us, and take tithes and offering.

Daijha, Chris, Caleb and other children under 5<sup>th</sup> grade and under were sent to the Community Kids program until service was over. There they learned about Saul who persecuted Christians and was eventually punished by God. When Saul learned his lesson he changed his name to Paul. There we also were able to dance to a song called "Shake," which was about shaking your sins away.

Meanwhile in the main sanctuary our message for today was Repentance, which means great grief, discomfort, and destruction. Pastor John began the message by reminding us that a Christian life is a life of repentance and that no one else can repent for you, it is your responsibility.

The whole message today was taken from Psalm 51, which was David's repentance after he sinned with Bathsheba. In Repentance you can't continue to live as you lived before and you need a change of mind. Pastor John said that there were 7 steps to repentance; the first step he talked about was The Appeal.

The Appeal is God's love and mercy and which allows us to repent for our sins. The next step is The Confession, which is confessing to God that you are the offender and God is the offended, we are the sinner and God is the sanctifier. Our sin is against God only. The next step is The Relationship, this is where we hear from God and have a desire for him to tell us, "well done." The fifth, is The Christ, this is where Christ hides his face from your transgression and puts it upon himself since he died on the cross for our sins. The next step is The Renewal, which is asking God for something new – basically, a cleansed heart. In doing this you are then filled with the Holy Spirit, and the sin has been wiped clean. The last step is The Result; this is witnessing the outcome of repentance. As you continue to be filled with the Holy Spirit you become less about oneself and more about Jesus.

Now our life will display his glory and can represent him.

After the message we went back on the bus and Pastor Carol gave us each half of a donut to satisfy our hunger. After our snack we picked up Ms. Bridges and headed to The Smithsonian Museum of American History. The first exhibit we visited was called *Through the African Americans Lens*. We saw the famous counter where the young African Americans kids demonstrated "sit-ins" to stand against segregation by sitting at a "white-only" counter. In the exhibit, we saw some anti-slavery paintings by Richard Ansdell. The painting depicted an enslaved couple trying to make it to freedom. It also had examples of how African Americans used clothes to represent their religious affiliation, occupation, and personal beliefs. One of the African American fashion designers we learned about Vanilla Beane who was a Washington D.C based milliner. She was best know for her unique design for Civil Rights pioneer Dorothy Height. Another notable outfit we saw was a tracksuit of Carl Lewis. The best part of the exhibit was when they played "The Payback" by James Brown in a section where one of his grandiose Hammond B3 organ was, with the word "The Godfather" stitched in. The organ was James Brown's favorite instrument because he liked to play it while warming up the band before his shows began, surprising the audience.

The next exhibit we visited was *The Star Spangled Banner*, which had the original American flag that was raised over Fort McHenry during the Battle of Baltimore during the War of 1812, where American troops were trying to stop the British invasion of the country. We learned Francis Scott Key was inspired to compose the "Star Spangled Banner" after witnessing that the flag was *still* there the

following morning after heavy artillery fire from British war ships. In 1931, the song became the official national anthem of the U.S.A.

The flag had 15 stars on it, representing the 15 states at the time. It was 30ft x 42ft, which is very large but we learned that, that was the normal size for a flag at the time. Mary Pickersgill started the flag in the summer of 1813 with the help of her nieces, daughters, and an African American indentured servant. She was paid \$405.90 for making the flag, which was a hefty amount back then.

The First Ladies exhibit was all about the women who really ran the functions of the White House. We were able to see numerous dresses first ladies such as Grace Coolidge, Nancy Reagan, Eleanor Roosevelt, Lou Henry Hoover, Jacqueline Kennedy, Julie Grant, and of course Michelle Obama. Another interesting thing that they had in the exhibit was the official China that was used within the White House for official dinners, going all the way back to George Washington's tenure in office.

We saw a picture of President Obama and Michelle at the inauguration in 2009. Michelle's elegant inaugural attire was a cream dress that included crystals and Jimmy Choo shoes, and Barack wore a black tuxedo.

We then saw other artifacts of the Presidency, including President Lincoln's top hat he wore on the night he was assassinated in 1865 at Ford's Theater by John Wilkes Boothe. We saw several of the funeral programs from all the Presidents who died in office.

After leaving the museum we made our way to the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. At the memorial there were crowds of people and being that it was so hot we all hurried to get up the steps and into the building. The statue of Jefferson was huge and everybody was taking pictures of himself or herself with the statue from the front. We thought, there's nobody in the back! Since Mr. Darrin said we could take a picture anywhere we liked so we thought it would be interesting to take a picture from behind Jefferson too. After spending a little more time taking pictures we went back on the bus to cool down and drink some water to keep ourselves hydrated.

We headed to Ruby Tuesdays, which is a place we haven't dined at yet. Sister Joyce was especially excited because that's all she kept on talking about for most of the trip. When we got there we made sure we ordered from the salad bar because we needed vegetables tonight, and because the salad bar is just really good. The budget tonight was \$12 dollars so the older kids had to make sure we spent wisely and work together without going over \$48 dollars.

In the end none of us went over and Pastor Carol didn't have to take any money from anyone. The next thing we needed to do was go to the laundromat and wash all the stinky clothes that were smelling up the bus. All the chaperones and their mentors went in and did the laundry while the rest of the student were supervised by Garin because she was the oldest. In the laundromat it was humid and the

chaperones had to constantly come back on the bus for water. In the end we had no difficulties at this laundromat and we finished our clothes right on time.

We all wanted to go to the movie theater, so Pastor Carol decided to take us to see Minions, which was our first venture to the theater. Some of the older kids didn't want to go see it, but eventually agreed. In the movies a few people fell asleep but overall everybody enjoyed the movie and it was surprisingly funny. After going to the movies it was real late and we had to get back to our hotel room. This concluded our fourth day of our five-day visit in D.C.

We all went to sleep looking forward to another day of fun.

## **Day 29- Washington D.C. (Day 5)**

Reporters: Maleah McCullough and Tony Taylor

Devotion: Proverbs 28:4-5

Today, breakfast was at 9:16a.m. We walked down to the bus at 11:00a.m, and started off with devotion from Proverbs 28. We got on the road so that we could pick up our host Ms. Bridges. We arrived at her hotel at 11:22a.m, and we all greeted her with a loud "Good Morning". We got back on the freeway then arrived at the White House at 11:39a.m. While waiting outside for clearance, 2 people with a cart of V8 juices gave everyone free juice. Even though nobody liked them, we all thanked them. Pastor came back to us, and sadly today there weren't any White House tours.

Instead, we went to the Smithsonian Museum of Air & Science. Ms. Bridges wanted to show us 3 exhibits before we could roam free. The exhibit that we went to first was the Skylab Workshop where we saw a collapsible shower, and a working space for an astronaut. Second, we went to the Space Race where the other 2 exhibits were. In the 1950s the test flights were experimental space planes advances of wing space flight. The shuttle had three main engines and two solid rocket boosters that were reusable. The three main engines generate the same force. The paint covers the huge external tank weighing 279 kilograms. The shuttle on its launch stood as tall as a 20-story building taller than the Statue of Liberty.

After about 30 minutes of reading, Pastor finally released the older 8 students to walk around the museum. First, we went to the "How to Fly" exhibit where we learned about Gravity and Air Sciences in daily lives. Second, we went to the "Sea & Air Flight" exhibit where we saw several models of the airplanes flown in WWI (World War 1) and WWII (World War 2). Several things that was cool and interesting, was the amount of information about African Americans. While exploring more of the other



exhibits, I started seeing plaques and information about African Americans as important figures in Aerospace.

One was about William J. Powell Jr. who was a leader that gathered several Afro-Americans, so that they can build their economic independence; He found the Bessie Coleman Aero Club. Another important figure was Bessie Coleman herself, and she is very important, because she was the first Black Woman to earn a pilot's license. She couldn't achieve this goal in the U.S due to racial rejections, but she moved to France and received her license there. Finally, Cornelius Coffey was important to me, because he was the first African-American to create a non-university-affiliated agronomical school in the United States.

It's very good to see that us black people can achieve so many things; even with all that our ancestors went through. So, after walking around the museum and looking at many interesting things, our final stop was at the "Early Flight" exhibit. There we watched a short video about the first airplanes made by the Wright Bros.. The Wright Brothers are the first people to create airplanes.

We met back up with Pastor Carol at 3:30p.m, and left the museum. Sadly, after spending 4 days here in D.C., we had to say our final goodbyes to Ms. Bridges. Some of the participants said a few words to her while she was on the bus. Finally, she left us with parting words and told us to remember Psalms 100:3.

After we dropped her off, we returned back to the hotel to drop our bags off and walked to dinner at 5:40pm. We were supposed to eat at Chili's, but their waiters kept asking for 20% of gratuity, and Pastor Carol thought it was rude to do that. Instead we went next door to Legal Seafood, which U.S.A. Today and Good Morning America ranked as the #1 Seafood Restaurant in America.

To us, Legal Seafood was the best seafood restaurant to dine at in the world. It is the place where people that work in the White House go for dinner or lunch and if you're a Congresswoman and Congressman. While we were dining, a man approached Pastor Carol and complimented us on our behavior and etiquette. None of us knew who he was until Pastor introduced him to us as Congressman Al Green from Houston, Texas. He was so impressed that he donated \$100 dollars towards our meal.

After dinner we walked back to the hotel, and had a fun night. There was a choice of playing games in the Lobby area, or going to swim. While Tony was playing Uno, his Auntie and 2 Cousins made a surprise visit. They haven't seen each other in 5 years. It was a great surprise, and he had a chance to spend time with them. After that, they left, and everyone stopped playing games, and went up to their rooms at 9:15pm.

# Day 30- Norfolk, Virginia

Reporters: Jalen Carter & Michael Boyd

Devotion: Proverbs 29:3-5

Today we headed to Norfolk, Virginia but first we took a photo at the Virginia State Capitol building in Richmond, Virginia. We stopped at the Flying J gas station so Mr. Wayne could fill up the bus.

While we were in the store Pastor Carol let us buy chips under 3oz. We were blessed at the store. A man named Mr. Hightower asked us how do we know we are saved. Jalen answered with, "...because we accepted him as our Lord & Savior!" Mr. Hightower then gave him two dollars for answering correctly. A short while after, he went inside the store with Pastor Carol, and bought us two packs of water, oatmeal cream pies, and chocolate swirls. This was the most blessed trip at the gas station we've had.

We headed directly to Faith Deliverance Christian Center, which Bishop Dr. Barbara Amos founded in 1986. She also founded a school called Faith Academy school of Excellence in 1993. We're here for the Faith Fellowship Conference, which is a collection of church groups gathering to fellowship together. We had a snack of fried or baked chicken and a butter roll. We went to dinner at 5:00p.m.

After our snack we played basketball. Some of us played basketball and Jalen sat on the benches working on his journal. We enjoyed ourselves. Then we had to leave to check in to the hotel. We had fifteen minutes to get ready and come back down to the bus. Then we came back to the church and had dinner. For dinner we had spaghetti and a piece of garlic bread.

After dinner we had to play basketball for seven minutes before going into bible study. Dr. Amos's overall message was that Jesus made us one and not the same she spoke on John 17. That was the last prayer of Jesus and is the longest prayer in the bible. She broke down the chapter because in verses 1-5 he was praying for himself. In verse 6-19 Jesus is praying for his disciples. Then in verses 20-26 he prays for future believers. Lastly, Dr. Amos said "Conflict will always be present in life as long as we love the lord." The message concluded with prayer for oneness within the church, and for all of us to congregate as one.

After bible study we played basketball and also got haircuts. All of the males got our hair cut really short. Then some of us made some shots while playing basketball, just not every shot. Next we headed to the hotel for the night.

# Day 31- Norfolk, Virginia (Day 2)

Reporters: Amaya Wingfield and Caleb Smith

Devotion: Proverbs 30:1-4

This morning, we boarded the bus at 8:15am. Caleb started off our day with devotion from Proverbs 30:1-4. "To me," he says, "God is always watching you so you so if you do something and you act like you don't know what happened, God knows but the other person might not know." Amaya said our prayer for safety, protection and open minds and heart. As we traveled to our destination, we drove under the Hampton Tunnel. It is half bridge and half tunnel that cross the Hampton River. Once we crossed the bridge, Dr. Amos pointed out her Alma Mater, Hampton University. It is a Historically Black College. The University was founded April 1, 1868 by the American Missionary Association, which consisted of black and white leaders and provided education to freed slaves. Hampton University is also one of few institutions that provide proton therapy for cancer patients.

The first thing that we did was go to the Gloucester Institute. The Gloucester Institute was founded 2006 by Kay Cole James. Due to Kay Cole James buying the property she stopped the property from being turned into a bed and breakfast. The Institute was founded because of a man named Robert Moton. Robert Moton was a very influential person in the 1920's and 30's. It took him a while to get to this and it started in 1890's when he got a degree from Hampton University and then became an administrator. During this time it was hard to dream for an African-American to live in the state that he did. He was built a house in York River. It has 3 stories and had a mile of land on each side of his residents. The house has a total of 9 rooms and almost every room had an adjoining bathroom. On all the levels there was sections were you could look at and see the river and back yard.

In 1915 he was named principal of Tuskegee after the death of his mentor Booker T. Washington. His second daughter to his wife Jennie Dee Booth married Frederick Douglas Patterson. Fredrick D. Patterson believed in what Robert Moton had started and helped his dream to grow. Fredrick Patterson was a highly educated man. By the age of 31 had a Doctorate of Philosophy from Cornell University, Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine and a Master of Science from Iowa State. He became the only African-American working at the Iowa State College veterinary clinic where he learned important lessons about race.

In 1935 he became president of Tuskegee Institute. He helped turn the institute into a full-fledged University. Most of the programs he started helped African-Americans to get further in the University. In 1944 he founded two things that would majorly shape today's world. He started the school of veterinary medicine at Tuskegee University and the United Negro College Fund (UNCF). Both programs in

themselves have taken Robert Morons dreams to even bigger places. Today UNCF was raised over 3.6 Billion since it creation in 1944.

Soon after the death of Fredrick Patterson the original house built for Robert Moton was passed from UNCF member to UNCF member until Kay Cole James bought it in 2006. She is the founder and president of the Gloucester Institute which trains and nurtures future leaders in the African-American community.

After we left The Gloucester Institute we drove for about an hour and arrived at a Japanese Buffet. A majority of the food that was found at the restaurant was Japanese but there were some foods like pizza, mac & cheese, cheese sticks, and chicken.

We returned to the Naval Lodge to get about four hours of rest and arrived at the church at 6:30pm. There was a section in the sanctuary that was open for us. We noticed that Sister Gwen was missing in our group. Turns out she was an usher for the services and other services to come. There was praise and worship going on and we were very familiar with a couple such as “Jesus Reigns” and “Amazing”, Dr. Amos gave the message about Unity and how the singers in the church put on the uniform. The praise team was wearing red and black except one. He was wearing white and black. Dr. Amos gave a serious message about the younger generation and the older generations. Everybody needs to be on point and wear their right uniform or the union is going to mess up. Dr. Amos says finally that to stop passing the torch and share it. If the church doesn't let change happen eventually the church will die out. She said although we may not all be the same, dress the same, or look the same, we are and we need to accept each other and let other peoples styles combine with ours. Dr. Amos had the entire congregation who was 30 years and younger to walk out of the sanctuary. Mr. Darrin was the last to leave, but Dr. Amos stopped him and brought him to the front. She explained how if the older people don't let the younger people change the church it will be to late. At the point when the adults realize that the church is dying and try to adapt to the change everyone in the church is old and people that our younger don't want to be there.

It was a great message this evening. You can tell that the saints were already pumped up and excited about the conference this week. After the service, we got on the bus and returned to our hotel to get ready for the 9am service.

## **Day 32- Norfolk, Virginia (Day 3)**

Reporters: Christopher Wiley & Nia Boyd

Devotion: Proverbs 31

We left the Navy Lodge at 8:24am. I did prayer, and Nia delivered the devotion for the day. At 8:38am, we arrived at Faith Deliverance Christian Center to continue with a full day at the Faith Fellowship Conference.

There was a performance with dancers wearing gold and black that inspired us all to clap and sang along to the beat. We sang several songs during praise and worship, we even witnessed saw a toddler playing drums!

Dr. Amos began with “Bless the Lord. Lord Make Us One.” She started to open her arms, and the congregation gave praises to God. The congregation got louder and louder with praises. Some people were shouting, some people were clapping hard, and some people began to cry out. Dr. Amos continued her message about us coming together as one saying to the congregation “Lord, make us ONE!”

“We bless his name, he blesses us, then we are one!”

“I bless the Lord for him to make us one!” She then presented to us a mother and her son, along with her mother and grandmother, showing us that there were generations of people praising the Lord.

All of us people 30 and under stood in front of a person older than us and prayed for them. We all were scattered around the church and choose an adult to pray for. Some of us prayed for better communication with our elders.

For lunch, the youngest and the oldest were divided. We had a choice to play basketball, foosball, or hockey, while the youngest ones played in a jumper. Jalen and Anthony played alongside boys from other congregations in an intense game. They both played really well, Jalen scored 8 points and Anthony scored 10 points to help “Team California” win! During halftime, they played line dance music, and most of the crowd began to crowd the court and danced to the “Cha-Cha Slide” and the “Cupid Shuffle.”

We headed back to the hotel at 2pm and had a small meal and some of us took naps and caught up on our journals. We arrived back at Faith Deliverance at 6:45pm.

We sang more songs, and most of the congregation stood up and clapped. Some sang along, and some were encouraged not to stand around, because as Pastor Sharon Riley said, “We can’t just stand and not praise the Lord, if we are, call the paramedics” because something must be wrong. It looked that everyone was having a jolly time. There was another praise dance with mimes, and they did a great job telling a story of deliverance.

Dr. Amos continued her series on oneness by speaking about bridges. She spoke on 3 points about bridges:

- 1.) Design – important that the bridge is unique / must be engineered for where it is
- 2.) Construction – important what the bridge is made of (wood, steel, concrete, etc)
- 3.) Maintenance – must be upkept and inspected to make sure it can handle the load it is supposed to

She spoke that you want a bridge to last longer than it's maker. A bridge survives it's users without losing its usefulness, and that no bridge is made only one way, you use it to come, and to go.

She spoke about Venice, Italy and how there are over 117 islands that are all connected by bridges. Even though they are separate islands, they are still connected, and are bound by the same government, laws and are under the same flag.

She made used the bridge as a metaphor for the church, and how we must build bridges between the older and the younger, and different factions within and how we must share the torch and *not* pass it.

## Day 33- Norfolk, Virginia (Day 4)

Reporters: Anthony Davis & Geovanny Martinez

Devotion: Psalm 1:1-3

Today, we boarded the bus at 8:15am because we had to go to Faith Fellowship morning service at 9am. Geovanny and Anthony led devotion. Geovanny read from Psalms 1:1-3, and Anthony prayed for the bus. We started service singing various gospel songs including, "Filled With Praise", "I'm Totally in Love With You", and "I Love You Lord Today". Then, the praise dancers came on stage, and performed for us. Throughout the conference, we've seen young and middle aged praise dancers. However, today the praise dancers were much older.

Dr. Amos spoke on oneness again, and being unified. She read from Jeremiah 29:11. Dr. Amos spoke about God putting us where we need to be. Also she said that a person's gift only works where God has us to be and the place where God has put you is where you will be blessed.

Dr. Amos spoke about the early years of ministry after she founded Faith Deliverance Christian Center in Norfolk; it was a huge problem with people breaking into cars in the church parking lot. She said it got to the point where she wanted to leave the community for a better church campus, one where there were not any problems with crime. After addressing the congregation and praying to move she got a letter from one of the Elder's sons, who was schizophrenic, that told her not to let the devil scar her away because God put you in the community within Norfolk for a reason.

Years later, Dr. Amos said she went to Kinston, North Carolina under God's guidance, even though the neighborhood is not perfect, it is where she belongs. She said she loves Kinston, and she enjoys blessing and giving the people in the neighborhood hope, and it is where God intended for her to be.

Then, the Eagle Empowerment chaperones went to wash laundry, and the students went to CiCi's Pizza with the Kinston chaperones. After we ate lunch at CiCi's, we went back to Faith Deliverance Christian Center. Some people played basketball, some people played foosball, and others just sat in the bleachers and socialized.

After our fun time in the gym, we went to the hotel, and prepared for our last Faith Fellowship session. Pastor Carol told us we had to wear our black and white outfits. We got back on the bus a 6:15pm, so we could make it to 7pm service.

The last Faith Fellowship conference was full of praise and worship. We started service with singing worship songs to the Lord. Most of the service we praise danced, sang, and thanked God for all he has done for us. The dancers from Kinston, North Carolina mimed to the song, "His Blood Still Works".

Toward the end of service, we took communion. The cracker represented bread, and the grape juice represented the blood of Jesus and his body being broken. In doing this we are remembering the day on Calvary and the last supper.

After service, we took group pictures with the children from Kinston, and we congratulated them on their performance. When we got back on the bus, we had to wait for Pastor Carol. While waiting for Pastor, Mr. Darrin spoke words of encouragement. He told us you may ask people to pray for you, but you may never pray enough for yourself. Also, he told us to ask God to give us the strength to get through our day because we have days when we are feeling sad. From his message, I know I need to pray more and ask God for guidance.

Pastor Carol and Dr. Amos boarded the bus, and we clapped for them and we said thank you to Dr. Amos for a great conference. Dr. Amos gave us chips, spaghetti, salad, and bread rolls to take with us to the hotel for dinner.

When we got back to the hotel, we went to Ms. Tinika's room to eat the spaghetti, salad, and bread rolls. Some of the students from Kinston came to Ms. Tinika's room as well. After we finished eating, Ms. Tinika let us stay in her room for about an hour. We played Uno and Skipbo. Some of the students from KCC came to the room and fellowshiped with us

## Day 34- Orangeburg, South Carolina

Reporters: Malik McCollough & Janell Grey

Devotion: Psalm 2

Many of us liked our time at Faith Deliverance Christian Center and the Faith Fellowship Conference. There was a lot of praise and worship through all of it. Many of us enjoyed the singing and dancing because it made us feel happy. The praise and worship made me feel closer to God. Our last day at the Faith Fellowship Conference was one of the best services. We learned from all of the services that we have to unite as one to get things done. The older and younger generation have to learn how to respect each other. Sooner or later the younger generation will be running the church and the seniors will look back at what a great job they did. We are different because God created us like that. But we have to be united. Bridges is what helps communities come together and go back and forth. Dr. Amos' message really helped me better myself and changed my train of thought. When we returned home, I will work on becoming a better person.

We enjoyed playing basketball and other games with each other and with the other young people who gathered to have fun. We especially enjoyed hanging out with the youth of Kinston Christian Center because most of them were funny! Having shared the bus and hanging out in leisure time with them only made us closer, coming together as one. We now have friends in different places across the country.

Much of today is dedicated to driving over 400 miles from Norfolk, VA to Orangeburg, SC, so much of the ride we are catching up on our journals. This morning, we left the Navy Lodge at 8:00am. While on our way to Orangeburg, we had to wait for a draw bridge to go down since a ship was passing through. Next to the bridge was the largest Naval Ship Yard in the country. The second largest is in San Diego, California. We entered North Carolina at 10:27 am. We made a stop at an information center along I-95. I grabbed 3 books Chapel Hill/Orange County 2015 visitors guide, North Carolina the official 2015 travel guide, and Charlotte 2015 official visitors guide and map. For brunch, we went to Cracker Barrel, and many of us ordered breakfast, since we only had continental breakfast at the hotel the past few days.



We entered South Carolina at 3:43. We stopped at the South Carolina visitor center. There wasn't a map of the state of South Carolina unfortunately, and the bathrooms were not kept up well. South Carolina is hot! It was 103 degrees when we boarded the bus again.

Within our destination city for the night is Claflin University, which is the oldest Historically Black College/University (HBCU) and is one of the top liberal arts colleges in the state of South Carolina. South Carolina State University (SCSU) is also in Orangeburg, and has an undergraduate program in nuclear engineering and the only Master of Science degree in transportation in the state. SCSU is also the location where the unfortunate Orangeburg Massacre occurred in 1968, where State Highway patrolmen shot at 150 protesters who were gathering to protest segregation. Three were killed and twenty-eight were injured.

We arrived at the hotel around 6:25pm. We checked in and returned to the bus to go out for dinner. Many of us enjoyed the food, and the restaurant was packed since it was a Saturday night. We arrived at the hotel to 10:05pm to get some rest for church tomorrow morning.

## **Day 35- Orangeburg, South Carolina (Day 2)**

Reporters: Garin Gray and Daijha Belisle

Devotion: Psalms 3

We all got on the bus by 9:00am. Garin read Psalms 3:5 and 7 while Daijha said the prayer. After devotion we were on our way to New Mount Zion Baptist Church for the 10:00am service, the church of our host Dr. John Singleton. We arrived at the church at 9:34am. We waited a while and then went into the church. We started off with a prayer and went straight into praise and worship. The church was big and the church wasn't filled but when we sang, it seemed like the whole church was filled with people.

After the song, we were introduced to the church and we all prayed. Then the congregation stood up to sing Hymn 391 "I will trust in the Lord". Next on the program were tithes and offering followed by another song "He keeps on Blessing". After the offering he had a memorial for those who've passed away and have gone to be with Jesus in heaven. We prayed for them and the Pastor Yvonne mentioned that they were celebrating their 82<sup>nd</sup> anniversary, which means they've been around since 1927, which is a long time.

After that we sang another song “I made it through: which was Garin’s personal favorite and really got the church going. The message today was “God will send you a David when you’re facing a Goliath”. Basically what Pastor Yvonne was saying that when you face problems in life (Goliath), God will be on your side and will be there to help you (David). She also mentioned that some people don’t realize that their David has come because its not the David they’ve imagined. They imagined him to be bigger than Goliath and have more armor than Goliath not a kid with a slingshot. Meaning people want God to send someone in their favor so when they come they don’t recognize that the person who God has sent is their prayers being answered.

After the service we said our goodbyes and went back to the bus. While on the bus Dr. Singleton said that on behalf on “True Vine” which is Dr. Singleton’s youth group they would treat us to lunch. I know Pastor Carol was happy about that and it was really kind of them to do that for us. Today Dr. Singleton would treat us to Ruby Tuesday, a place we had not been to in a while. So we made sure we went to the salad bar in case that was the last time we went there.

After dinner, Dr. Singleton said a prayer and we headed to the Capital of South Carolina; Columbia. Recently, Charleston, South Carolina has been the center of controversy after African Americans were killed by a white male in their church based on Confederate beliefs. It was decided that the Confederate flag, which once waved proudly in front of the state capitol, would retire. We looked all over the campus to find where it stood. A state patrolman informed us that the entire pole and its base was removed and was replaced with grass showing a faint sign that it was there. The confederate flag hung with the American one since 1962 and took it down in 2000 and placed it in front of the building. It was then taken down in 2015.

As we continued our walk around the capitol building, we noticed a memorial that was dedicated to African Americans. There was a replica of the slave ship and how all the slaves were packed into a small space. They also had a statue in memorial of the Palmetto Regiment, which was a military unit that recruited primarily from the Saluda County, South Carolina area. The regiment served with distinction in the Mexican War. A monument on the grounds of the South Carolina statehouse is dedicated to these brave soldiers. We took a group picture and took in a movie.

The older kids went to see “Antman” while the younger kids and chaperones went to see “Inside Out”. We all enjoyed our day of sight seeing and entertainment. We actually made it back to the hotel to relax, watch television and catch up on our journals.

## **Day 36- Atlanta, GA**

Reporters: Tony Taylor and Maleah McCullough

Devotion: Psalms 4

This morning, we boarded the bus at 9:15am with all of our bags and suitcases. Our devotion this morning came from Psalms 4. We left our hotel at 9:30am after prayer. Before we left, Pastor Carol told us that Ms. Mandy, the hotel manager at the front desk complimented our behavior and deducted \$10 from every room which added up to \$100 that we didn't have to spend. Instead Ms. Mandy told her to use that money and treat us to lunch.

Our next destination is Atlanta, Georgia, only three hours away. After an hour and a half, we arrived into Georgia at 11:26am and stopped at the Georgia Welcome Center. We got free maps and pins. While looking at the map, we realized there were 5 cities in Georgia that were other state capitals. There's Albany, Augusta, Columbus, Jackson and Nashville. The bus pulled off at 11:45am. For lunch, we used the \$100 Ms. Mandy let us keep today and we ate at the Cracker Barrel. After lunch, we played checkers right outside of the restaurant until everyone finished their meal. We arrived at the Wyndam Hotel at 4:00pm. We had about 15 minutes to gather our things to go swimming at our hosts' home. We finally left at 4:45pm to the house, which was 10 minutes away. We met Mr. and Mrs. Schultze (our hosts) then we changed into our swimwear. All of the boys decided to go for a swim while the girls played games until dinner. There were lifeguards on duty while we were swimming and we got to know them very well. One lifeguard "Ethan" taught everyone how to play corn toss and we all played 2-4 rounds.

For dinner there was chicken and pulled pork sandwiches, Macaroni and Cheese, and salad. For desert, was ice cream and popsicles. While we were playing, we received a free dental screening as well as free toothbrushes and toothpaste. What was so great about their home was the Chattahoochee River in their own backyard. We learned that is was a category 1 river meaning that it flows very slowly. About 30 minutes later it was getting dark and we had to leave. We arrived back at the hotel at 9:30pm and turned in to get ready for a very long day in Atlanta.

## **Day 37- Atlanta, GA (Day 2)**

Reporters: Jalen Carter & Michael Boyd

Devotion: Psalms 5:1-3

This morning we were greeting early in the morning by our hosts Mr. & Mrs. Schulze. Mr. Schulze gathered us together to give a speech about excellence and how it can carry you through in life. He began with a story about his origins in a small town called Winnigen in Germany, and how he met his father later in life due to the circumstances of the war. His family was poor, but his father after coming

back from the war was a forager, and knew of ways to get food to help feed his family. When he told his parents he wanted to be in the hotel business as a young man, his parents said “no,” until he persuaded them to allow him to work at the best hotel in the area, which was 100 miles away. He was only 14 years old, and was an elementary school dropout. He worked as a busboy, cleaning tables and shining shoes, and after a few years of carrying himself with excellence, he started moving up in the hotel industry. Still, he committed himself to go return to school one day a week to continue his education. He was promoted to waiter, and then was promoted to a room service director. He later worked on a cruise liner and travelled back and forth between Europe and America before being offered a job in Houston, TX.

Later, after continuing his ascent in the hotel industry through excellence, he furthered his education at Cornell University, where he learned more about the hospitality industry. One day, he got a call to help manage a new hotel company. He and his wife were doing well in Chicago with a hotel he was managing.

He asked his wife, who told him they should pray about it. Mr. Schulze took the position managing the new company. They went through many trials and tribulations from debt to raising a family, and many construction delays, but after praying and waiting they heard from God that if they were patient enough, great things would happen. The company he was asked to run was called The Ritz-Carlton, and under his leadership, the franchise has become one of the hotel companies most recognized with excellence in the world.

Mr. Schulze then spoke to us students that whatever we do in life, we must do it with excellence, and to never give up. He gave examples of workers who have exhibited excellence and have worked their way up from the bottom to the top because of excellence in their work, because they wanted to be excellent in life.

Shortly after we had breakfast, which was a restaurant buffet with gourmet food and eggs made to order. We needed voucher tickets to get into the restaurant.

Our host, Mrs. Schulze and her “A-team” of daughters and friends helped coordinate our trip in Atlanta and after breakfast, we went on the bus, and headed towards Historic Downtown Atlanta, to an area known as the “Fourth Ward.” Our first stop was the Martin Luther King Jr. Center.

While we were walking towards the building, we saw a statue of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s inspiration, Mahatma Gandhi, and a Civil Rights Walk of Fame dedicated to leaders, politicians and entertainers who have contributed to the progress of Civil Rights. We saw such names as Sammy Davis, Jr., Cathy Hughes, Rep. Maxine Waters and Rev. Al Sharpton represented by the size of their two feet.

When we entered the building there were multiple exhibits of different basic human rights that Black people didn't have because of the color of their skin. For example, Black people were not allowed to be firefighters, but they could visit the fire station. They had older dilapidated wooden shacks for schools while white school children had new brick buildings. They had libraries that they had old ruined books that they had to raise money to nonetheless have their own library, even if it wasn't in the best of condition.

We watched a 15-minute movie about how young people like myself contributed to the civil rights movement. They mainly contributed with sit-ins at segregated lunch counters and through marching in protest.

After the movie we went and saw Martin Luther King's neighborhood that he grew up in, which is now a national park. Mr. Donnel, who works with the Historic District Development Corporation, which works to restore houses in the area, gave us a tour.

Martin Luther King's neighborhood was called "Sweet Auburn," because it was one of the only neighborhoods to have the rich and the poor live close together in unity. Whites and Blacks learned how to live peacefully together during the time when he was growing up. Nonetheless, there still was segregation, and economically, Black people had to build places where they could go to buy food or go see a movie, go to school, or even have their own YMCA or community bank. Black people had to have their own businesses so that they could cater to the needs of their community, because they couldn't get their basic needs being excluded from many white stores.

Whites and blacks lived in unity with each other peacefully until the early Civil Rights Movement began, and whites and blacks became more segregated, with opposition to the idea of unity. For example, Martin had two white playmates when he was six but the boys' mother told them they had to stop playing with him because of his skin color, because their father would get angry that his children were playing with a black boy.

We got to take a picture in front of MLK's birth home, and walked down the street to the King Center, where Dr. King and his wife Coretta are laid to rest in a crypt surrounded by water. We saw the infinity flame that remains lit in their memory and symbolizes the struggle that we still go through now. We walked by Ebenezer Baptist Church, where Dr. King and his father co-pastored until King's unfortunate death in 1968. This was also where his funeral took place.

We took a trolley to Centennial-Olympic Park for lunch at Chick-fil-A. After lunch we went to the CNN building for a tour.

One of our guides, Ms. Trish, has worked as a producer and as a writer for CNN, writing and developing stories on topics concerning politics, sports, and medicine. She has worked with Wolf Blitzer

and Dr. Sanjay Gupta. Her favorite stories are the uplifting ones. She even did a story on Mr. Schulze and how he overcame poverty to owning multiple hotels and making a success of himself with excellence.

The CNN Center has the world's longest freestanding escalator in the world. Our tour guide Ms. Michelle first showed us what it sounds like in the control room. One of the men speaking over the control radio made fun of the on camera reporter and presenter saying that they had no emotion and she was "dead."

Then we went into a guest area where we could see how they produce HLN, which is CNN's sister channel. It was made in 1982 as CNN 2. They soon changed into Headline News, and now as "HLN." We learned how a teleprompter works and Michael got to be a "weatherman" for the day and stood in front of a green screen. He disappeared when he put a green sheet over himself.

We saw all the newsrooms for their stations and networks.

After CNN we went on the Wheel of Excellence. It is a Ferris wheel that went around 3 times. We saw The Coca-Cola exhibition building, Centennial-Olympic Park and all of Atlanta's Skyscrapers, including Phillip's Arena and the CNN Center.

After that we went back on the bus to go to dinner at The Varsity, which is the largest drive-in fast food restaurant in the world, and was founded in 1928. We mainly had burgers and fries or onion rings, and wore Varsity hats. The restaurant is part of Atlanta's history, a place that Mrs. Schulze described as a place where you must go at least once if you're in the city.

## Day 38-Auburn, Alabama

Reporters: Caleb Smith and Amaya Wingfield

Devotion: Psalms 6:2-4

This morning we arrived at The Hotel at Auburn University at 9:45am. We are now back in the Central Time zone (2 hours ahead). Once the bus pulled up to the hotel, we were greeted by staff members who were assigned to each group. They escorted us up to our rooms and helped us with our bags. They unlocked our rooms for us and gave us a quick tour of our luxury rooms. We were surprised when we saw our favorite candy sitting on top of the dresser along with a hand written note to each of us. The note was from the Managing Director Hotel Operations and Education Initiative Hotel Mr. Hans van der Reijden. In the note, Mr. Hans welcomed us to the hotel and to accept their gift of our favorite candy

and a soda. All of us remembered at our last meeting when Pastor Carol asked the participants as well as the chaperones our favorite candy. It was forgotten up until this moment. After we put our bags away, we returned to the lobby and walked down the hallway to a huge banquet area where a southern buffet lunch was served. There were, fried chicken, fried catfish, macaroni and cheese, greens, salad, potato salad, bread etc. We dived in after Mr. Hans introduced himself and informed us that there will be more activities later on in the hotel. Once we ate lunch, we had a guest speaker: Thom Gossom.

Mr. Gossom was the first African American athlete to graduate from Auburn University. He also received a full scholarship for the next 3 years. Mr. Gossom spoke to us for about an hour and talked about his life. He talked about how life is like a movie/theatre. It has three acts. His first act was growing up in Alabama and going to Auburn University as a black student. There was tension between him and his colleagues, which led to arguments or just avoiding them by staying in his room after games. After he graduated, he was drafted to the New England Patriots and Buffalo Bills. Once the NFL let him go, he turned his focus to acting (2<sup>nd</sup> Act). You may have seen him on series such as: In The Heat of the Night, Savannah, ER, Cold Case, and The West Wing as well as movies such as: Fight Club and Jeepers Creepers. For 30 years his life was dedicated to being on film or on stage. After 30 years of avoiding College Reunions, with the support of his wife, Mr. Gossom decided to attend and felt really good about going. He even locked arms with the man he resented after all these years and they became friends. After attending the reunion, we felt better about going back to Auburn University and currently is Chair of the foundation that raises money to support programs at AU. This year their goal is to raise \$1 billion dollars. Currently, they raised \$800 million based on Alumni donations and other companies and supporters.

We took photos with Mr. Gossom and boarded the bus to take a tour of AU's athletic center. It was established in 1856. The colors for the college are blue and orange. Once we arrived at the University, we visited the trophy room. There were a lot of crystals and also diamonds. Many of the trophies were from former athletes who won the Heisman trophy and other trophy's were on proud display. The baseball coach of AU along with some of the players also greeted us. They explained their daily activities as a student and athlete. One of the ladies that work there got us each a bracelet that said Auburn University on it. Our tour guide took us around the facility and showed us their training field both indoor and outdoor. We learned that the indoor training field is 4 feet too short to play an official game. Our tour guide also showed us the workout room. He explained that the coach is all about safety. So the players start off basic and work their way to advanced workouts. There is also a traditional bell inside of the workout room. It only rings when a player passes a personal workout goal and the entire room cheers in support. However, if it rings just for fun, the entire team is punished by the coach and makes them run up a steep incline they call "Green Monster". Our next room to visit is the players

meeting room. It is equipped with high tech gadgets like virtuous goggles that put the player back on the field from the moment they walk out of the locker rooms. After the tour was over we were introduced to the official mascot “Aubie” the tiger. He was very excited to see us and we took separate photos with him along with a group photo.

After the photos, we were introduced two of AU Ambassadors to show us a tour of the campus. Aubie joined us as well, but mysteriously disappeared after we passed his home: Jordan-Hare Stadium. We continued on without him and visited the student center, the communications building and the admissions building. We didn’t get to tour much because it was really hot and it was about to rain. The Ambassadors were kind enough to walk us back to our hotel, that was across the street, but before we left, they pointed out their current library building, which is five stories tall. What the contractors did not account for was the 5 million books that were given to the University and the library is sinking one foot each year.

We returned to the sweet air conditioning at the Piccolo Jazz Restaurant that was at the lobby of the hotel. He introduced us to his staff: the Front Desk Manager, and Manager and the Executive Chef of Arricio, the Manager of Housekeeping, and the Manager of Banquets and dining. We were split into groups and toured behind the scenes of what makes the hotel so enjoyable. We reached the 6<sup>th</sup> floor, which is only accessible by key entry. There was a small pantry that had fresh baked cookies and refreshment that is free to those who stay on the sixth floor. Next we took a tour of the presidential suite. It was a huge area that had a bar, a lounging area and dining table with a possibility of having two separate bedrooms with the doors on the side.

After our tour was done, we gathered our laundry and gave them to our chaperones. They went to the Laundromat down the street from the hotel while we were taken to the kitchen and had a private cooking class. On the menu today was our own personal pizza. With the help of Mrs. Schultze and the “A-team” and executive chef we all made a personal style dish that consisted of cheese, pepperoni, peppers, onions, cheese, sausage, cheese, ham, cheese and anything we could think of. We dined in a private closed off area in the restaurant and waited for our chaperones to return. Jalen and Mrs. Nadine received a special desert because it was their birthday.

Before we ended the night everyone gathered together to talk about how awesome our day was experiencing the luxury of the hotel and special VIP treatment. This was also the last night that Uncle Darrin was going to be with us. We gave our tributes and prayers for safe travels and love and he provided us with words of encouragement. Instead of goodbye, we said, “See you Monday” since he will be at the church waiting for us!

## **Day 39-Jackson, Mississippi**



Reporters: Christopher Wiley and Nia Boyd

Devotion: Psalms 7:1-3

The morning we had breakfast at 7:30am downstairs at the restaurant. It was buffet style breakfast and there was also an omelet station where we can make our own cooked by the executive chef. There were also biscuits, fresh fruit, pancakes, bacon, grits and oatmeal, potatoes, etc. At 8:30am, we boarded the bus and did our devotion and prayers. Before we left, Hahns, the hotel manager said a special prayer and told us that it was a pleasure serving us and invited us to return back to The Hotel at Auburn University. We also parted ways with our host Mrs. Sheri Schultze because she was driving back to Atlanta, Georgia. As we were pulling off, the staff of the hotel waved and we did the same. This was by far the best experience we've had at any hotel.

Our first stop before heading to Jackson, Mississippi was to visit the Auburn Raptor Center, which was only a 10 minutes drive from the University. The staff at the facility greeted us and they showed us the kind of meals the birds are fed. We saw frozen rats, quails, mice and other smaller meals. Raptors are birds that only eat meats. As we toured, we saw typed of owls, hawks and eagles. We learned that Eagles are no longer on the endangered species list or threatened. We saw how they train an eagle specifically the official eagle of Auburn University. Once they showed us how they trained him, we took a group picture with it.

Once we finished our tour, we boarded the bus and said goodbye to Uncle Darrin. We can't wait to see him when we return home on Monday! Pastor Carol received a basket from the "A-Team" filled with peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for us. She also shared with us the blessings, which continue to come in and how well behaved we, are in public. There was a waiter at the hotel that asked about us. He was completely shocked once Pastor Carol told him where we were traveling. He originally thought that we were privileged rich kids based on our manners and obedience.

Since we had a long drive ahead of us, we wrote in our journals and played games. Our next stop was the State Capitol Building in Montgomery, Alabama. It was very hot so we got off the bus quickly took our photo and go back on the bus. Next was Selma, Alabama. It was not originally on our list of things to see and Pastor Carol made a slight detour. She wanted us to reenact the moment when hundreds of black citizen marched across the historical Edmond Pettus Bridge to peacefully fight for the right to vote. Once we reached the top of the bridge, we took a picture. At the end of the bridge, was a museum dedicated to the events that led up to the moment, even the events they occurred after. It just so happened that a cameraman and reporter were there from Al Jazeera news that wanted to interview us to get our thoughts as we walked across the bridge. Pastors agreed and we were interviewed for about 30 minutes. It will be aired on Saturday August 1<sup>st</sup>. Because we did an unexpected interview, we were behind schedule and returned to the bus to continue our drive to Mississippi. We finally had dinner at Ruby Tuesday at 5:30pm. After we ate dinner, our waiter encouraged us to get back on the bus,

because there was a man whose confederate flag waved proudly over his truck. He was parked in the Ruby Tuesday parking lot but he was not in his car. We left the restaurant full and tired but we made one more stop at the State Capital Building of Jackson, Mississippi. In 1950, France casted 53 bells for the United States and gave them to the government. One of those bells sits in front of the capitol building. Finally we settled in 30 minutes later at the comfort inn. Tomorrow was have another long day ahead of us as we are traveling to Dallas, Texas.

## Day 40-Arlington, Texas

Reporters: Anthony Davis-Dolphin and Geovanny Martinez

Devotion: Psalms 8

Wow! Only 3 more days of Youth Tour 2015 left. Today we ate breakfast at the hotel at 7:30am. We boarded the bus at 8:30am. This mornings devotion from Psalms 8:2 and 6-9 was led by Anthony followed by prayer led by Geovanny. We left 8:38am headed for the Medgar Evers Museum in Jackson, Mississippi.

Medgar Evers was born in Decatur, Mississippi. He joined the U.S. Army in 1943. He and five friends were forced away at gunpoint from voting. Evers attended the University of Mississippi. He became Mississippi's first NAACP Field Secretary. He was an activist for voter registration, social injustice and desegregation of schools. He was a great civil rights leader in Mississippi. He was exposed to various threats and violent actions. On June 12, 1963, Ever was shot in the back of this driveway at his house in Jackson. He died a few hours later. Before we left Jackson we decided to visit the home of Medgar Evers and his family. On the way there, we turned onto the intersection named after Evers and Martin Luther King Jr. After his death, his wife gave the home to National Historic Parks. Unfortunately we were not able to go in because we arrived too early for opening. Instead we took a group photo and read the information on the plaques on the house.

On the bus, Sister Joyce, told us that according to U.S.A. Today, 52% of Americans only visited 10 states. However, we have been to over 25 states, which make us the better statistic. We continued our journey to Dallas, Texas. We entered the state of Louisiana at 10:00am. Just before crossing over, we drove over the bridge and beneath it was the Mississippi River. Right in the middle of the river divides the states. Both Mississippi and Louisiana share half of the river. We stopped for our dinner in Shreveport at Shane's Seafood and BBQ. While we were there, Minister Rita was reunited with her family and they fellowshiped together. After dinner, we took a quick photo op at Louisiana State University at Shreveport. The University was established in 1967. Their school colors are purple and gold. It opened as a two-year community college, but switched to a 4 years University in 1972. After

we left the college, we continued on to Dallas, Texas. We arrived at the State line of Texas at 4:51pm and we stopped at the visitor's center. Three hours later we arrived in Arlington, Texas. Our hotel for the evening was Comfort Suites located in Arlington on the outskirts of Dallas. After dropping off our bags, the group walked to Burger King for a snack.

## Day 41-Van Horn, Texas

Reporters: Janelle Gray and Malik McCullough

Devotion: Psalms 9:9-10 &16-18

Today, we woke up at 7 and had breakfast. Janelle read from Psalms 9 verse 9-10 and 16-18. We left the hotel at 9:35am heading to the AT&T Stadium. We arrived at the stadium at 9:41 since it wasn't that far away. At the pro shop their slogan said "Get Closer To The Game". We walked through the store and they had wonderful merchandise like wallets, glasses, footballs, puzzles, apparel, shoes etc. At 9:58am we waited outside to go on our 10:00am tour. Our tour guide Mr. Daniel introduced himself and took us upstairs.

We walked into the big stadium which is home of the Dallas Cowboys. The stadium has the largest dome structure, which is 3 million square feet. The moved from the old Texas stadium, which was East of Downtown Dallas. The new stadium opened in April 2006 and finished in April of 2009. It took one year just to dig the hole since they only worked at night to not cause traffic. If you looked above you could see their TV that showed whatever was happening below. They have the world record for the largest suspended television. It was a 4-sided TV that weighed 600 tons with 30 million LED lights. All the TV's put together were 25,000 square feet and it cost a pretty penny... \$40 million. We took a group picture and then sat in the seats. Mr. Daniel said that Jerry Jones supports a charity called A Hope to Dream. They host different events like rodeos, monster truck rallies, concerts, boxing matches, college basketball etc. Sometimes the TV would rise up and down for certain events so people would come in to wash it because it was waterproof. They also changed the fields for the NFL, College Basketball, Soccer and the NBA. During the NBA all-star game, there was a record breaking 108,000 fans that came. That is a bigger audience than the Cowboys game. There are 80,000 blue seats, but if you take out the cup holders they can slide the seats over and add 1 extra seat in each row making it a total of 8,000 more seats in the stadium. The TVs inside of the stadium are made by Mitsubishi. It is so big that they needed to set it up an elevator to go inside of the TV for maintenance. The ceiling can slide open using 128 motors. It takes 10 minutes to open and 12 minutes to close since the roof has a slight incline. They hold the record for largest outdoor stadium when it opened. From the ground to the roof it is 315 feet and the whole entire cost of the stadium was \$1.2 billion. Straight across you could see the owner's booth and where he sits during the game. In the food court, his wife Jean Jones and daughter

Charlotte wanted it to still feel like they were still at the game, so they had football shaped lights. There is imported marble from Italy which naturally reflects the color blue known to fans as "Cowboy Blue". Mr. Daniel told us that the plastic on the blue chairs were the strongest recyclable plastic from Australia. In the food lounge, they have different clubs. About 200 weddings have been held there. They set another record for the most TV's in a lounge sporting area. There are about 3,500 Sony televisions in a lounge sporting area. When serving food, nachos are #1 selling which is not surprising. An interesting fact is that there are 1,600 toilets. 60% are women and 40% are men. They can convert the bathrooms depending on the gender of the fan base. Next we went on the freight elevator, up the Press Box Room. If you are a part of the media, you get a free ticket, free parking and free buffet. The first game that they had was North Carolina vs. Texas and it was a basketball game. The media room wraps all the way around the stadium.

We walked over to the V.I.P. area and sat down. The chairs were so comfortable you could fall asleep. There are 320 luxury suite chairs and 95% of them were already leased out then the other 5% are to the public. Different suites held a certain amount of people. The Legends Hospitality owned by Jerry Jones served special foods like hand churned ice cream, burgers, sandwiches, fries etc. But they are serve a much more upscale menu as well. The suites are leased out for a minimum of 10 years. Some of the football players would rent out suites for their families like Emmitt Smith. He had a suite that was blue and silver since you could personalize your own. Sadly, we had to leave the V.I.P. center and we stopped to look at a picture.

It was on December 28, 1975 at game between the Minnesota Vikings and Dallas Cowboys Roger Staubach, the quarter back for the cowboys. They Cowboys were expected to lose the game but he threw the ball to receiver Drew Pearson and made the touchdown. During the post game interview, the reporter asked "What were you thinking when you threw the ball?" and Staubach replied, "I closed my eyes said Hail Mary 3 times". Before it was known as the "Hail Mary" the term was notable the "Alley-Oop". Ever since then the term "Hail Mary" became NFL vocabulary.

In another picture in 1973, Air Force Planes flew over the Football field. The old stadium is used for college football in 1960-1961. The next place we went to was the Cotton Bowl office, which was full of helmets from college divisions. On the glass of the office they had drawn out plays that were responsible for the team to win. Next we took an escalator to the top floor where you can see the skyline of Downtown Dallas. We were looking at how the structure of the roof is held up. 6.5 million lbs. of steel hold the rood and it is the strongest steel from Europe. The steel goes 71 feet underground connected with concrete. Mr. Daniel took another group picture of us, which was nice of him. They had a Dr. Pepper lounge with fake ice cube you could sit on. We took the freight elevator 50 feet below the surface of the earth and saw the rolls of turf used by the cowboys, college football and soccer neatly packed. The first locker room we visited was the Dallas Cheerleaders. In order to qualify to become a Dallas Cheerleader you must be a high school graduate, must be 18 years or older, a stay at home mom and enrolled in college. Two of the newest members are from Australia. The cheerleaders started back

in 1972 while the Cowboys were already established in 1960. As we walked inside of the locker room we noticed a cheerleader by the name of Jinelle, which was weird since we already have a Janelle on this trip. Aside from cheerleading, they also work with local charities and camps and travel overseas to visit the American soldiers. There was a 55-year-old woman who tried out and made it to the second round. While on our way to the Cowboys locker rooms, we took notice of the visitor's locker rooms. Usually high school and college students stay there. All together there are 7 locker rooms. In the Cowboys locker room the lockers were made out of African wood that was very rare and cost \$9,000. We took a group picture in front of the lockers. On top of their lockers, they had pictures of old football players. It didn't smell either because most of the time they don't practice at the stadium. While walking out, we saw their big showers and bathrooms. The next room we went to was the Post Game Media room. Before telling us about this specific room, Mr. Daniel told us that we were the best group he had since he is a schoolteacher. He told us that we had a future going for ourselves and that God blessed us with that. The Post Game Media room is where the football players come to give interviews about their win or loss. Our last stop was the main level of the field. Unfortunately we were not able to walk on the turf because they were setting up for a big event. This entry is where the Dallas Cowboys come out and get pumped up with fans on both sides of the ramp supporting them as they make their way onto the field. We returned upstairs and received a souvenir picture and we were able to purchase other souvenirs as well. We said our goodbyes to Mr. Daniel and boarded the bus to make our way to Van Horn, Texas.

Mr. Wayne needed to refuel the bus so we stopped at a gas station. While we waited, Pastor Carol allowed us to purchase a subway sandwich for lunch. On the bus we took a nap and watch 3 movies: "Like Mike", "Journey 2" and finished up with "Legend of Guardians" On our way to Van Horn, it started to rain a bit and it woke some of the kids up. At 6:48pm we stopped in the middle of nowhere at Huttle House for dinner. Many of us didn't like it but it filled our bellies. We boarded the bus and 2 hours later at 10:15pm we finally arrived at our hotel. We fell asleep almost as soon as we saw our beds. Tomorrow we are headed to Phoenix, Arizona.

## **Day 42-Phoenix, Arizona**

Reporter: Garin Gray

Devotion: Psalm 10:4-7

Today we woke up from a long day of driving expecting more. We got our bags down at 8:30am and boarded the bus. Daijha did the devotion Psalm 104:1-7 13 and 14, and Garin said the prayer to keep us safe on the road. We left the hotel at 8:35am.

On the bus all of the kids were required to get their journals up to date before using any for of electronics. While driving through El Paso, we could see Mexico. It was really cool!

At 9:30am we crossed into New Mexico from Texas. New Mexico is known as the Land of Enchantment. Our first stop in New Mexico was the welcome center where we took a bathroom break and pictures. When we got back on the bus, we watch the movie "The Goonies". Most of us went to sleep.

After a while we stopped at Lordsburg, New Mexico and ate at Kranberry's Family Restaurant. After lunch, we headed back to the bus. On the bus we watched another movie the original "Parent Trap". While watching the movie, we crossed the state line of Arizona at 1:31pm. The next movie was "Akeela and the Bee".

The movie ended just in time as we pulled up to the State Capitol Building in Phoenix. After Pastor Carol informed us that at 7:00 anyone who wanted to join may go to iHop. Everyone went except for Ms. Tinika, and Amaya. Daijha and Caleb stayed overnight with their grandmother. It was one of the best nights we had. We all reflected on our 43-day trip across the United States and how thankful we were for our driver Mr. Wayne. It was discussed that because he took great care of us on the road and went above and beyond that we, as a group would tip him when we arrive to our final stop. HOME!

## Day 43-Los Angeles, California

Reporters: Tony Taylor and Maleah McCullough

Devotion: Psalm 11

Today is the last day of the trip, and we are doing the last devotion from Psalms 11. Breakfast was around 7:00am and we all boarded the bus at 8:30am. We were introduced to Ms. Toni, (Daijha and Caleb's Grandmother) our future chaperone. Tony did the devotion and Maleah said the prayer. It was a very significant closing to our devotion as Pastor Carol noted that we were the same ones to start the devotion on day 1. While on the bus, Auntie J gave us a question, which was "What do you want the

most in the world?” and ended of by saying “The best things in life are not things”. It confused all of us participants, but really it means the best thing to have in the world is not an object like an Xbox, games or anything you can easily get rid of. The best “want” in the world is to have happiness. After about an hour, we arrived into our state line CALIFORNIA. The time was 10:52am, and everyone was happy. Also the border of California sits in the middle of the Colorado River. While waiting for the next stop, we watched the movie “The Game Plan”, and it seemed to keep everyone’s attention. After passing through Palm Springs, Chino, and several other counties. We ate our last meal together at Golden Corral in Hacienda Heights. Everybody had good time while we anticipated seeing our family again.

We boarded the bus for the final time, our last destination is home. As we journey our way down Central, Pastor Carol invited anyone on the bus to have final reflections. We all went up to the front one at a time and said how much the trip meant to us, who got on our nerves the most, and how close our friendships were to those we have never met before this tour. Afterwards, all of the chaperones got up and told us how proud they were of us and noticed how much we have grown since June 22<sup>nd</sup> and to keep up the good work. They encouraged us to keep our journals so that years from now, it would benefit us as we continue to pursue our education.

The bus pulled into the alley and we can see our family at the end, but Mr. Wayne stopped the bus and also gave a reflection on how we were well behaved and mature for our age. According to his travel log, the total mile that we traveled from June 22<sup>nd</sup> to August 3<sup>rd</sup> is 8,663. That is over 1,000 miles that was on our itinerary. The bus continued its way down the alley and we finally see our family. There were signs and loud cheering, but before we got off the bus, Pastor Carol gave the final prayer. It was an emotional prayer as she cried tears of happiness that our trip was successful with no accidents or sickness. She prayed for everyone on the bus before we were all officially dismissed as Alumni’s of Youth Tour 2015 and reunited 43 day later with our family.