

Bonswa from your favorite honorary Haitians! We're not sure how your Good Friday began, but ours involved some party-bus karaoke-fueled by two hours worth of inadequate "sleep." Our journey commenced, as most things in our life do, within the parking lot of Gwynedd. Our bus, driven by a very nice man by the name of Anton, arrived at the G M of A promptly at 2 a.m. We won't lie and say we were bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, mostly because we couldn't see in the dark of the "morning," but we were undoubtedly more than excited. After hugs and kisses and "Don't get malaria, we boarded our shuttle with way too many bags and began our 2-hour journey to the JFK International Airport. After some much-needed jam sessions with songs like "Eye of the Tiger," "September," and some "Circle of Life," the remix, of course, our chariot arrived at the airport, and our journey officially began. Surprisingly enough, the 10 girls we brought made it through bag check, TSA, AND security with only one pat-down for Gab Greene and one bag search for Lauren Dennin, who may or may not have had to been trying to "smuggle" a clarinet overseas.

Our flight began right after sunrise, so everyone was much more awake and ready to embark on this unforgettable experience. Three hours and 47 minutes, five different multi-player trivia tournaments, and a few too many interrupted naps later, Port-au-Prince was in our sight, soon to be in our hearts. Being in Haiti for less than five minutes was more than enough for us to know we were going to fall in love. Despite Miss Julia Kreutzer being stopped and held by immigration officers for her use of Mr. Fromhold's red pen on her Customs Form, the gang eventually wound up at the baggage claim where we met two very sweet and very helpful Jamaican brothers who were visiting their family in this beautiful country. As we moved through the airport, Brynn Diamond had no qualms about attempting friendships as soon as possible. Such friendships, however, started with a rusty version of "Bonswa" followed by an enthusiastic, native response, and finished with an "Oh, Bonswa is all I know...merci?" Twenty-three new friends later, we made our way out to meet our friend Miss Andi Healy, our immersion coordinator for the trip, who then led us to our van. We'll be the first to say that fitting 12 people, plus all of their bags, and three translators in one van is not the easiest thing to do, but being that close that early helped us get even more psyched.

Prior to an exotic Haitian spread of about 400 french fries and mini pizza's, we all took a little nap to get ready for the rest of the day. After lunch, we went for a swim in the hotel's outdoor pool and enjoyed a lively game of Sharks and Minnows. A meet-and-greet orientation meeting with Mercy High School, a fellow Mercy school from San Fran, CA., followed suit and we soon had not only 10 friends to enjoy this experience with, but 13 new Californian ones as well. Dinner consisted of a colorful meal and a lot of laughter, and finished off with a prayer and reflection led by Sister Mary Sullivan. We finished our day off with a group chill-sesh as we watched the sun go down and debated the legitimacy of a mango, or not mango, tree. To follow-up, Gab Greene was right in her identification of the fruit and Mr. Fromhold was forced to pay up a whopping single dollar bill.

While tonight was our last night in beautiful Port-au-Prince, the crew looks forward to traveling to Gros Morne tomorrow, where the real immersion can begin. Stay tuned for more updates about this trip of a lifetime.

Signing off,
Gab Greene '17 and Julia Kreutzer '18