

Dear Class of 1955,

Namaste. Thank you for your generous gift in helping to make possible my off-campus study in India. I am an Ethnic Studies and Psychology major and not only have I found this service-learning experience to be a rare and blessed cross-cultural opportunity for others and for myself, it has also helped me to greatly deepen and clarify my sense of meaning and purpose in life. Most importantly, the interspiritual component to my course and time spent in India has led me to grow closer to God and become more determined to live as a servant for the poor. I am going to be baptized this Easter and for this I am forever grateful for many of you who contributed toward a new chapter in my life.

It is my sole belief that a true servant for the poor must understand or have experienced what circumstances the people they serve are living in. Due to the many humbling experiences I have had throughout my time in India, I have committed myself to do selfless work (serving God in the poor) and do so in God's name and love as prayer and gratitude. Seeing the good work Sister Aquinas and the Holy Cross Sisters is doing has left a long lasting impression in me. When Sr. Aquinas expressed her view regarding how healthcare as ministry and offering to God lies within those who opted to not work in the big hospitals but will rather choose to serve amongst the poor and the most needy, I immediately saw it as God's calling to me. My wish to pursue a career in healthcare is so that I can use myself as a tool to do what I can do to serve those who lack the access to one of life's basic needs. Seeing poverty-stricken communities everywhere in India has made these beliefs more ingrained in me. Just like how you have generously given to make my off campus study possible, I too would like to give willingly and generously to others as my gratitude and offering to God.

While away from the distractions of big cities, I was able to focus solely on my inner journey contemplating in a peaceful state of mind. India offered the time and environment for me to come to terms with my past regrets so they no longer interfere with my inner peace.

Contemplative practices, as I have learned throughout my experiential learning in India, has helped me to track these thoughts and prevent them from inflicting more pain by leading me to embrace them altogether with love and acceptance. I have found perfect peace in this way as well as connectedness to God through His love. Towards the end of the trip, I found within me a deeper appreciation and love of God, spiritual growth, and a deep sense of tranquility of the mind and body as well as contentment. The impact that these few weeks have given me far surpass that of the other classes I have taken at Cornell. I will always remember and cherish these memories and continue to strive to become a worker for and amongst the socially disadvantaged and underprivileged.

Thank you once again for contributing to my memorable off campus study experience.

Sincerely,

Lisa Wang



