

Community  
engagement  
experiential learning  
assignment



## **Community Engagement/Experiential Learning Assignment**

A Reason to Celebrate Life There is always a reason to celebrate life. The life itself that we live, not to say the many material things we possess, is enough reason to say that we have been blessed by God. Celebrating life does not just mean having a party or dinner in a special restaurant, buying oneself a new gadget, or going on a trip to the pacific. We can also celebrate life by spending at least a day in our lives to make other people live. I came to realize this idea when I joined our church's outreach program for abandoned youth at Home of the Innocents in Louisville.

Our church, \_\_\_\_\_, recognizes the need of every member and of the community around us. Thus, every June and December, we organize outreach programs to help those in need by providing relief goods, gifts, food, old clothes, and other basic needs especially for children. From time to time we also give donations for disaster victims to help in every way possible. Last March, we joined the Samaritan's Purse's drive to help tornado victims by cleaning up and distributing goods. I was able to contribute in that project by distributing drinking water, which our church members donated. I spent about three hours, distributing water and packing goods for distribution. Last month, we went to the Home of the Innocents in Louisville. This refuge for abandoned children, which started operation in 1880, houses children of all ages and has a mini hospital and school of its own. Our group went in the convalescent center and spent time with the children who were sick at that time.

We arrived at the center at eight in the morning and were given some orientation by the director. The people there were very friendly and

explained to us the history of the center and its progress. We were inspired by the vision of their founder, James Taylor Helm, a doctor, of providing shelter and education to poor children and single mothers. The house was very well kept, and its surrounding is really healthy for growing children. In the Kosair Charities Pediatric Convalescent Center, we found children with different illnesses. Some were malnourished because they could not eat much and were relying on dextrose. I felt a pain inside me, seeing those kids cry because of pain. The sight of a child receiving an injection for antibiotics made me feel unsurprisingly uncomfortable. I, myself, was afraid of injections when I was younger.

In our area of assignment, I and my church mates Paul and Kathleen sang some songs and read stories to the children. They loved to see the pictures in our story books and were eager to sing with the puppets. Seeing the joy in their eyes made me feel happy. During lunchtime, we ate with the children and helped feed them. We did our best to make them eat their vegetables and soup. Some children were quite noisy because they wanted to hear more stories. Fortunately, nobody cried while we were there. By four in the afternoon, we bid the children goodbye and sang another song. The children were really surprised when we brought out the gifts we had for them. They could not wait to see the crayons and pencils that I knew were very small things compared to the sufferings they bore.

The day in the center made me realize a couple of things about my life. First, I feel lucky to live and have a family. Second, I realized that life, despite its difficulties, can be celebrated by sharing time and giving attention to others, especially those poor children in hospitals and abandoned homes.