

Z DZIENNIKA WOLONTARIUSZY AMERYKAŃSKIEJ ORGANIZACJI GLOBAL VOLUNTEERS

WRZESIEŃ 2013

BARBARA, OLIVIA (12), ALEX (10), Jack (7)

NIEZWYKŁA RODZINA Z KALIFORNII

<http://polandteamjournal.blogspot.com/>

Friday, September 27, 2013

Final thoughts

Here are some thoughts shared by volunteers on their final day in Poland:

"I THOUGHT THIS WAS A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE. I WILL HAVE TO COME BACK. I HAVE LEARNED A LOT. I THANK YOU FOR MAKING US FEEL WELCOME. I ENJOYED HELPING YOU IN THE COMMUNITY CENTER." ALEX (age 10)



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"MY CHILDREN AND I HAD A WONDERFUL TIME IN POLAND. THE EXPERIENCE WAS MORE THAN I COULD HAVE HOPED FOR. IT WAS UNBELIEVABLE HOW KIND AND APPRECIATIVE THE TEACHERS WERE TO US. WE HAD A WONDERFUL ASSEMBLY AT SCHOOL TODAY WITH SONGS/POEMS AND FAREWELLS. IT WAS OVERWHELMING HOW MUCH TIME AND ENERGY THEY PUT INTO THIS AND WE ARE SO THANKFUL FOR ALL THE POLISH PEOPLE DID FOR US." BARBARA



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"I HAD A VERY GOOD TIME IN POLAND. BEING AT THE STRZALA SCHOOL MADE ME VERY HAPPY. I LIKED HOW THEY SANG THE SONGS WE TAUGHT THEM AT THE FINAL FAREWELL ASSEMBLY. A LOT OF KIDS WANTED TO PLAY FOOTBALL AND IT WAS SUPER FUN. I MADE A FRIEND AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER, PATRICK. WE HAD FUN TOGETHER." JACK (age 7)



"VOLUNTEERING IN POLAND GAVE ME A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON LIFE: HOW FORTUNATE I AM, HOW IN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME YOU CAN SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY." OLIVIA (age 12)



<http://polandteamjournal.blogspot.com/2013/09/final-thoughts.html>

Posted by Global Volunteers at 1:18 PM 0 comments

Thursday, September 26, 2013

Another fun day at the school in Strzala

Message of the day: "Love your neighbor as you love yourself"
"(Matthew 22:39); Shared by Jack

Today was a rainy and cold day - we started out as usual with a great breakfast and the morning meeting . The children and I went to Strzala school and helped with the 0/2/5/4 grades.



Again we were greeted at the door with smiles and good mornings!! The children are always so happy to see us! We quickly went upstairs to the younger class and got right to it by singing the "Itsy Bitsy Spider". Ever enthusiastic we then sat down to do our colors. Many of the younger children know their colors and are happy to complete their work. We have found that many of the children at the school are familiar with American nursery rhymes and children's songs - Our exit song has been the wheels on the bus.

After a short break we were off to second grade - in this class there are a few children who are quite good at English and it is fun to watch the students all turn to these few and ask them to translate -

We had a great time doing letters numbers and a school favorite bingo!!

We now come to the unanimous favorite part of our day - where the children and I participated in the fifth grades P.E. class. During this time the teacher made teams and we were asked to compete in a mini competition where you were awarded points for first/ second or third place -

We were asked to do such things as run in races / crawl on the floor / jump over things and my favorite crawling under legs and passing a basketball through ones legs. After the competition we played a game of basketball. During this gym class it was great to see the children all trying to communicate with myself and the my kids - they tried to use their English words to explain / translate when the p.e. teacher spoke as well as use terms like good job when we won . I feel like in this setting it is much easier to really see the children's personalities and their abilities to speak - rather than standing up in classroom in front of everyone. Hands down it was our favorite hour thus far - it seems sports really is an international language!

The end of the day we met with fourth graders we spoke about the American flag while incorporating their knowledge of colors and shapes. The kids did a great job and of course asked to play Bingo!!!

At the end of the day we went to the community center. Jack now has a friend Patrick who requests that Jack sit next to him and it is great how all the children come up to Jack and I to say goodbye and "see you tomorrow"!

<http://polandteamjournal.blogspot.com/2013/09/another-fun-dat-at-school-in-strzala.html>

Wednesday, September 25, 2013

Our day in Strzala and at the community center in Kotun

Message of the day: "A life is not important except the impact it has on other lives" – Jackie Robinson (shared by Barbara)

Today we began our day with breakfast and a team meeting. My Mom had message of the day and Cassandra had the journal entry. After that we went to school in Strzala. We first taught in the third grade. We made American flags with the children . They were very excited to do this and were especially careful to make sure they had all 50 stars on the flags. We also played "Bingo" which the children love to do.

We had a short recess which Jack and I played American football with many children and Alexandra jumped rope with other children. The children are quite interested in playing football and holding the ball the correct way.

We had a 6th grade class after the break and we tried to do some more talking with them - We had everyone stand up and introduce themselves and say something about them. We asked them questions and had them ask each of us a question. The time went by very quickly.

For the third class period we split up and my mom and Jack went to a second grade class and Alexandra and I went to a class with 15 and 16 year olds who asked to speak with us. We told them a little about ourselves and they asked us questions. They seemed very eager to speak with us and find out things in America.

We went to lunch where the children like to come up to us and say hi and want to spend time with us. Surprisingly the lunch food was very good. (not like at our school back home)

Following lunch we met with the 5th grade boys. They were shy at first but then warmed up. We spoke to them about what they wanted to be when they grow up and most would like to be football players except for a couple who would like to be electrical engineers. We then played bingo and they were having such a good time they asked to stay and play more instead of go to recess.

After school we were lucky to have Agnes the teacher who has been helping us at school take us on a small tour of Siedlce. We were able to visit the palace which was very beautiful with its marble staircase. We also visited two churches one the cathedral was massive but beautiful and the other a smaller church that was just as pretty.

When we were done in Siedlce we headed to the community center. Alex and I got to share a little bit about ourselves. We played "Bingo" with the children - they seem to very enthusiastic about this game! After the community center and our walk home we had a Polish lesson with Iwona. I found it very interesting .

As usual our dinner was delicious followed by some delightful desserts Cassandra brought from town.

Today was a good day - I love seeing all the smiles on the children's faces when we come to their classrooms and how happy they are just to say hello to all of us. It makes me feel really good to be helping the kids with their English if it is only for a short time - I love how friendly they all are and how nice they are to us. Even though we don't always speak the same language and it is hard for them to find words I like bonding with the girls in the older grades and finding out we have some of the same interests even though we live thousands of miles apart-

As for the rest of the volunteers Cassandra was ill this morning and missed her classes. She was touched to find out through letters and notes how much she was missed!!! Rene spoke about how important relationships are whether you are volunteering or doing anything. He spoke about an autistic boy in one of his classes and how well the boy does with his work. Kenita spoke of her day at the school for the disabled and how it was struggle to get the English program into this school and that it would add value. Ralph spoke about his afternoons with a few older kids and that they are hard workers.

Overall - volunteering and giving back to the Polish community is so important. I will always remember the experiences I have had in Poland and the amazing people I have met . I would love to come back again each year even when I am an adult.

<http://polandteamjournal.blogspot.com/2013/09/our-day-in-strzala-and-community-center.html>



Posted by Global Volunteers at 7:57 AM 0 comments

Tuesday, September 24, 2013

The best thing I have ever done in my life

Message of the day (shared by Olivia) – "A day without laughter is a wasted day"

There are myriad reasons why volunteering has changed my life forever. I have often heard people talk about the benefits of volunteering, of it being a way to reach out and touch the lives of others in a positive way. But I didn't fully understand the impact of that claim until I started to volunteer myself. This is my first time participating with the organization Global Volunteers teaching conversational English abroad.

I am immensely grateful that the opportunity to teach English abroad in Poland was available to me. I have noted that the students of Poland are both culturally and linguistically "diverse". I have also found that many students know the importance and need to learn English as a second language. As I can see: many students that we teach English to have traveled from long distances by train, bike, or walked to various places to learn a foreign language. Poland along with Global Volunteers understands that being multilingual, English especially, is essential to expanding the intellectual views and progression of Poland, in this ever changing world in which we live. I'm proud to say that the students I teach are diverse intellectually have good learning habits in memorization, critical thinking skills and creativity. I am extremely impressed with the students of Kotun and Siedlce. It has been very pleasurable experience for me and the rest of the volunteering staff too; as they would attest to this statement. The following are a few comments of my Global Volunteers' team members:

• I noted in my observations that my previous year students, that I am again teaching have increased their English skills and development, particularly in the area of memorization.

• This being our first time volunteering in Poland my family and I have never felt so warmly welcomed. From the moment we arrived at our destination schools, I saw the students waiting with anticipation upon our arrival. We felt honored.

• What has brought me much pleasure in my second time volunteering here in Poland is the interaction I receive from adult classes at the Community Center in Kotun. I feel that I have helped create a "Cultural Feedback" that has driven the adult students to engage, retain and ultimately make for successful interaction of group discussions in English.

• After this being my sixth year teaching English in Poland, I have found that each time I come back I gain new experiences with students. I can't express enough that each and every year I have taught, each student or group of students has brought much delight and reward to teaching. I guess I have no boundaries when it comes to teaching English to my students. I enjoy teaching the youngest, the oldest and embracing the challenge of disabled student. I teach equally to all.

In conclusion to volunteering and how it changed my life...well... I guess it was every time, a student learned a new English word or wrote a sentence, it taught me that they depended on me and that I contributed to the development of their personality. That I'm important in their lives, and every time they accomplished a new word with success it gave me a sense of accomplishment. But most importantly, the students of Poland taught me to give.

Volunteering my time to teach conversational English was the best thing I have ever done in my life. It taught me that money will never be my motivation for working, that motivation for me will only come when I know I can make a difference in another person's life.

<http://polandteamjournal.blogspot.com/2013/09/the-best-thing-i-have-ever-done-in-my.html>