

Hi, my name is tyler burnell and i stand before you today a new person. My experience in the Dominican Republic has changed my whole life and the way i look at things in this life and the way i look at things in the world. To explain all of my life changing experiences i had would take me hours. So instead i will tell you the experience that has affected me the most. Thursday was easily the hardest day, this was the day we went to the dump. As we pulled up the road we were stopped by a guard with a gun. Im not sure who got off the bus to talk to him but thankfully we were allowed to pass and as we went up the road we knew we were getting closer because the stench of the trash grew stronger. We saw the mounds of trash and the people and small children sleeping on top of it. At that point the whispers on the bus turned to silence. All of a sudden the bus just bus just stopped. No one moved as we waited for Father Taillion to lead the way. He stood up in silence and walked off the bus, we all followed him until we were all off the bus. Right away the bugs surrounded us. The stench was so horrendous we had to put hand sanitizer under our noses because of the stench. To people started to come see us and see who the new people were entering the dump. But all of a sudden they stopped and made there way towards Father. Now if you dont already know Father Taillion speaks fluent French. Seeing how most of the people in the dump were Haitians he spoke to them and told them that were from Narragansett Rhode Island and God had sent us to bring them food and salvation. But in return we asked for one thing, and that was there prayers. The people all started clapping and were very excited. They were more excited that we asked them for something then they were about getting food. There is a mayor of the dump there and he spoke to them and told them to make a line from the doors of the bus towards the back of the bus. While this was going on Father rushed all of us back onto the bus. I stayed outside the doors of the bus to hand out food. At first everything was going really well, until more people saw what was going on and started to approach us from all directions. The mayor of the dump who was on the bus helping us hand out food started yelling at them in French and Spanish but they didnt listen. The line quickly broke apart and the people started to mob. I was grabbed by the mayor and pulled onto the stairway of the bus. Now instead of handing out food i was blocking the mob of people from coming onto the bus. As food was being given out over my shoulder dirty hands from everywhere grabbed at me and at the food. Every minute or so a small child would pop up at my feet and try and get food but they were shoved away by the older people. Once we were ot of food the other missionaries started yelling out that there was still food in a compartment under the bus in a large container. I walked up the steps to see Father and Andrew Raiucchi the marine who been with us, making there way off the bus. I stopped and looked at the Father and said "Father please let me go with you and help!" he looked at me with stern love filled eyes and said "No, you've done enough" I wanted to argue with all my heart but by the time i went to speak Andrew and Father Taillion were already off the bus. I ran to the back of the bus and looked out the window to see what was going on. I realized that Father had gotten back on the bus and only Andrew had gotten off. I opened my window ready to jump out if Andrew was in trouble. As soon as i opened it and andrew opened the compartment to get the food the crowd consumed him and my eyes filled with fear. As i contemplated whether or not to try to help Andrew emerged from the crowd. He came out of the crowd with bags of food in his hands and the look of a true marine on his face. The people did not wait for him to hand out the food but instead took it themselves. By the time Andrew had turned around the people had taken all of the food. He realized what happened and shut the compartment door and hurried back onto the bus. Everyone was silent and and the bus driver quickly turned the bus around and we left. The drive home was one of the longest drives ive ever had. So many thoughts were going through my head and i wasn't really sure what had just happened or why it happened. Once we arrived at the orphanage everyone started crying including me. Everyone saw that we all needed love and someone said "Group hug" and those words brought everyone together. As we all hugged we looked into the sky as if looking for a sign from God. And at that moment around the sun was a rainbow that surrounded the sun as if God was telling us we were more then friends, and we knew at that moment that we were so much more then that. We had become a family. That day i will never forget. It is the most life changing experience i have ever had and that is why have shared it with you today.

Thank You.