

**IMPRESSIONS AND REFLECTIONS
OF FIRST-TIME MISSIONERS
TO NICARAGUA, 2014**



Grace Seymour, a thoughtful young adult

The ways of the timeless cannot always be explained. But I can tell you that the most fleeting moments in life are often the most meaningful ones, revealing to us like nothing else those things eternal which only the soul can see. My trip to Nicaragua this past summer was no exception. Truth be told, it was the last thing I had imagined myself doing, traveling to a place I had never been with people I knew nothing about. Yet are not those things we neither look nor have any intention for — the unexpected, the unplanned, the unknown—those same things that can often change us in ways so much more profound than we could ever attain on our own? For who am I to pretend to be able to bring any change or even hope to the lives of the people in this country, when I cannot even will myself to change the slightest bit to become the person I know I was made to be? Still, if it hadn't been for every single one of the generous hearts that have believed and supported this mission through the years, I would have never had the chance to meet the countless beautiful souls who flung the doors of their hearts wide open for me to enter and to stay beyond my time in Nicaragua. I would not have had the opportunity to share meals and conversations with others on this same homebound journey, and nor would I have had the honor of being touched and taught by their stories and their generosity. Just as it was in life together that our Lord chose to reveal himself to us, it is also in life together that we are changed and transformed by the same Lord, even if only glimpses at a time, to fully become the bearers of Eternity that we once were and to live the life we were created to live. It is in life together that we once again welcome each other home to the place we have always known but have not yet been — here, there, and everywhere.

—Grace Seymour

Kate Dolan, a precocious 10 year-old



As a first-timer on mission trips and only my second time out of the country, I wasn't entirely sure what I was getting into when we decided to go to Nicaragua. Even though we went to meetings ahead of time, I didn't really know what I thought Nicaragua was going to be like nor what I wanted it to be. But looking back on it now, my first (and hopefully not last) mission trip was amazing. In Nicaragua, the days were always hot and the place we were staying had pretty tropical birds and comfortable woven hammocks. The best part of Nicaragua, however, was what lay outside the gates of our "home away from home."

Outside the gates was a world unlike any I had ever seen before. The people there always seemed to have a job to do, which made everything feel very busy. My favorite job I saw there was on a bus ride when we saw two men on horseback herding a large flock of animals, and they passed right by our bus! Whenever we went to the market I saw unique and interesting goods I had never seen before. I got a colorful wooden calendar at the market. I like it because the months are written in Spanish, which is good practice. Next year when I am in middle school I want to take Spanish as a foreign language because, after going to Nicaragua, I realize how practical it is to learn Spanish. Sometimes at restaurants it was hard to communicate, and I had to ask how to pronounce words and ask for things I needed. Luckily we had three or four kind people on the trip who were able to give assistance to those who didn't speak Spanish.

My favorite job we got to do in Nicaragua was painting the school. I loved the feeling of knowing that I was helping other kids like myself. Some other jobs that we did in Nicaragua included visiting hospitals. When we went to the maternity ward I loved seeing all the moms with their adorable newborn babies. It wasn't all work on the trip, we had some fun too. When we went to San Juan del Sur we had lunch on a beautiful boat and got to swim to a sunny beach. My sister and her friends and I climbed up a rock face and, to our surprise, there were small crabs all over the rocks. I'll never forget giggling as we tried to avoid the crabs.

I hope I can go back this year because, as fulfilling as this experience was, there is always more work to do in the world, and it's up to us to get it done

—Kate Dolan

