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› Engineering student impacts Tanzanian orphanage while volunteering abroad

Two to three months before arriving in Tanzania, Nisha Samburmurthy was certain that she wanted make a lasting physical and financial impact at her volunteer placement in Arusha.

“When I was at home, I was trying to think of ways to accumulate some money for the orphanage where I would work. I realized that I didn’t have time to do anything too big, so I wrote an email and sent it to my parents and asked them to send it to their friends and family. The turnout was amazing.”

Nisha, a native of Westchester, New York is currently studying engineering at Case Western Reserve in Ohio. She decided to use her summer break to volunteer overseas with Projects Abroad, a global volunteering organization with various placements all over the world. She was really surprised by the support that she received from home.

“Some of things that people were saying and some of donations that they were giving were so incredible! When I got here [Tanzania], I had almost 700 dollars. I thought that was a decent amount but when I converted it to Tanzanian Shillings, it was a lot more than I expected.”

Nisha was assigned to a small orphanage that provided a home for some children and a school for others. “On my first day, the director, Madam Lois wasn’t there. It was just me and the children and I remember feeling so overwhelmed by the fact that the children and the teachers don’t have a lot but they are always so happy and optimistic. It’s one of the most amazing things that I’ve ever seen.”

It was obvious that the orphanage and the children were lacking many essential resources so Nish communicated with Madam Lois to find out what were the greatest needs.

“Food was the first priority. They were in a food shortage at the time so we used the money to buy rice, beans, sugar, oil, spaghetti, cooking charcoal, maize flour, and porridge flour. The second thing was medicine because all the children got sick at the same time. We purchased cold and cough medicines and also skin creams.”

There was enough money to also buy clothes and school supplies but the bulk of the money went towards buying a sim tank and water pump.

During her time at the school, Nisha reported to school five days a week and spent the mornings teaching math, grammar, science, phonics, and art & drawing. In the afternoons, she played games and read books with the children or assisted the teachers with cleaning.

“I’ve been extremely humbled by this whole experience. I learned that assuming the best in people is not a bad thing. One time, a lady came to the orphanage with her baby begging for money. They really don’t have a lot at the orphanage but Madam Lois still managed to find something to give her. She gave her a bag and food. People don’t give poor people things. Even if you have something, it’s a little more than what they have so you should give something. I thought that was amazing and humbling.”



CARE PROJECT IN TANZANIA

More info on Projects Abroad

› www.projects-abroad.org