

Students go on Global Leadership Adventures



PHOTOS FROM CAMRYN SIMON AND MAGGIE MATTES

By Michael Ruprect
EDITOR

Many students vacation in tourist hotspots like Florida and Mexico, however, sophomores Camryn Simon and Maggie Mattes chose to travel to authentic, non-tourist communities.

They visit countries through Global Leadership Adventures. GLA's mission is to inspire high schoolers to realize their potential to transform the world and their role in it. To accomplish this, students perform community service, experience hands-on learning, culture immersion and adventure. The organization offers summer trips to countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America.

Last summer, Simon traveled to Chiang Mai, Thailand. Mattes went to St. Mathew's Village in Belize.

"It was a ton of fun," Simon said. "It's not really a place that I would ever be able to go just for a normal vacation, so there was an opportunity, so I wanted to take it."

Both Simon and Mattes spent three weeks in the countries. During their time there, they visited an elementary school, painted walls, paved driveways, taught kids English and planted gardens. While in Thailand, Simon also did tourist attractions like riding elephants and ziplining through a forest.

Although both girls went by themselves, Simon's mom, Anne Simon, said these trips help to teach skills like independence that a traditional classroom can't. She added that the values GLA trips instill in students can help them in future careers.

"Though I worry about her when she is off on her own, I want her to experience all that life offers. I want her to meet other people and learn from everyone, and I don't want her to be afraid to explore any opportunity life may offer to her," Anne said via email. "Also, I hope she learns to take pleasure in the simple things, to learn from the kids she helps, to learn the value of service to others."

Camryn and Mattes decided to go on a GLA trip because their siblings had gone on them. Both girls also wanted to expand their knowledge of other cultures.

"It helps you become more independent and more out there in the world," Mattes said. "It's just really good to see how other people in different countries live and see how different our lives are compared to theirs, and it's a good refresher for everyone."

Because of their positive experiences, both Camryn and Mattes said they plan to go to Ghana and Tanzania this summer, respectively.

Anne said the trips also allow kids to gain an appreciation of their own lives and the world, which spurs their love for traveling.

"I think that (Camryn) comes back from these trips with a bit more empathy and understanding for people as well as a better perspective on her own life," Anne said. "It helps her to slow down and see someone else's point of view just a little bit better. It also lets her know that the world is a very wonderful place worth working hard to earn the opportunity to explore."

Although the trips Camryn and Mattes took were organized through GLA, both hope to travel independently one day. Camryn said that these experiences will also help her make career choices in the future.

"I want to be a doctor or something and travel to places. I can determine where I want to go based on places I've already gone or heard about," Camryn said. "I just think it's a really good experience that not a lot of people get to go on, and it's just such an eye-opening experience, and you feel really good about yourself for doing all of this service, but you also have a really fun time, and you meet kids from all around the world or country. It's just cool to experience a new culture and live in a different place for a couple weeks."



HELPING OTHERS | Sophomore Maggie Mattes helps a group of students. "My siblings thought it was really fun and I just thought it would be a good experience to help other people," Mattes said. "It helps you get a better understanding for the outside world and all that."



OFF TO THAILAND | Sophomore Camryn Simon works with a student. "I think it gives kids a good opportunity to see how lucky they are and to give back and help others and it makes them appreciate everything they have more and not take things for granted," Simon said.

Abandoned buildings become students' stomping grounds



By Chloe Ribco
STAFF REPORTER

The Packard Plant is a symbol of the strength in the Motor City. It was a booming car plant that fell to ruin under a crumbling economy, a playground for urban explorers from around the world and a new light in the rebirth and regrowth of Detroit having a significant impact on native Detroiters Geoffrey Young.

Fifteen minutes down I-94 West are the remnants of a once three-story Packard Automotive Plant. When the plant was built, it not only reinforced the automotive significance of Detroit, but also revolutionized construction and architectural procedures. The Kahn Bar with a reinforced rebar system, used in the original construction of the building, is still used today. Along with groundbreaking concrete technologies, the Packard Plant was also a hub for wartime artillery during both World Wars. In 1942, the plant halted all automotive production and began making Rolls Royce aircraft engines and naval engines for the U.S. along with its allies. During the war years, the plant employed around 36,000 people.

Although the war brought great prosperity to the plant, the multi-story factory plan became obsolete and according to packardplantproject.com, production was moved to a more modern factory on

Conner Avenue in 1954. The Packard Car Company went out of business completely in 1956 and the plant was sold for parts and leased out to various tenants.

By 2010, all of the tenants left and due to bankruptcy the plant became completely abandoned, making it the urban explorer's paradise. Urban exploring is exactly what it sounds like, exploring urban locations, but specifically abandoned buildings.

"Exploring the remains of old buildings has always got my eye, there's so much history in them and so much to learn," said Mullens.

Although Mullens prefers less popular locations, such as the Northville Psychiatric Hospital, people come from near and far to get their own in depth history lesson inside the Packard ruins.

That is, until Fernando Palazuelo, a Spanish developer and CEO of Arte Express, bought the property with huge plans for renovation. He claims to have put faith in the project after being impressed by the power, charisma and future of the town.

"I think that every city has a heart and whenever that thing is sort of decaying or beating less than it wants to, that's kind of sad for the city," English teacher Geoffrey Young said. "So, I appreciate seeing the heart of downtown and midtown and the cultural areas have a new life in them I think that's very exciting, it gives people in the city a thing to be proud of and also attracts the people from outside."

When visiting the plant now, security guards are prowling around the clock, being sure to keep trespassers off the property. The building is still approachable but only from public streets, one step on the property and guards are quick to approach, although they are generally very nice and will give insight on what's off limits and what's fair game, the main concern is safety when walking among the rubble and waste that is left of the buildings.

"(I usually go urban exploring) on the weekends later at night usually, which probably isn't good." Senior Emily Maul, addressing the danger of urban exploring at night. The first stage of reconstruction began on Tuesday, May 16 and the whole project is expected to be complete in anywhere from seven to 15 years, but tenants may begin moving in by next year.

The project has locals excited for the future and is bringing a feeling of hope to our city.

"I think if I were to visit or if I had visited the area of the packard plant say 10 years ago, there's a sort of decayed look of the area and I think that whenever you take that thing and start to revitalize it, that it says something to the residents that their city has value still, and that the things that were part of the past are still very much present and useful. So, I think it's a very exciting thing for the city to see that happen," Young said.



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