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March 2013

Letter from the Editor

March has been a month of great actions from our volunteers. The ASF Talibés centre benefited from a great donation from Louise Tremblay that allowed them to have more space to organise some of their activities. They have a new wardrobe as well to store the centre's medicines.

A big soccer tournament has been organised and financed for the Talibes by Seth Hindley with the support of the staff and volunteers.

We had our first dirty day. We cleaned the beach with some locals in Saint Louis. It was a collaboration experience with us

- Louise Tremblay for the mega donation!
- Seth Hindley for organising a brilliant tournament for the Talibes!

To all Projects Abroad Senegal volunteers and staffs but also the "Week-end à tout Coeur" for the worthwhile dirty day at the beach.

We would like to invite you to find our Official Facebook Group by searching Projects-Abroad Senegal – The Official Group. Also, if you would like, add us as a friend so that we can be in touch before, during and after your trip to Senegal.



My Facebook name is Habib Projects Abroad. Or if you are a Twitter fan, you can also follow the latest news here, our name is Proj_AbroadSN.

Best wishes from Senegal.

Habib and Fina



Tarah Wright - 2 Week Specials, Care & Community in Senegal

Hi! I'm Tarah Wright and during August of 2012 I stayed in Senegal for three weeks. Before going to Senegal, I knew it was the place where I wanted to spend my summer. Here at home, I am an African dancer for a company whose dances and culture comes from the Senegalese culture. Through this company I have been taught a lot about Senegal, met many Senegalese people, and have just been completely immersed into the culture.

Because of this, I wanted to experience the real thing. And, after researching the literacy, unemployment, and poverty rates in Senegal, I knew this was where I could not only have a lasting impact, but also learn and experience personal growth as well. That is how I came to the decision to go to Senegal, which led me to Projects Abroad.

Arriving in Senegal



When I stepped off the plane at the Dakar airport, my biggest fear was that I wouldn't be able to communicate with anybody, because I didn't speak any French. As I walked around to claim my bags and be picked up, that fear just got bigger and bigger. Things changed when I met Habib (Projects Abroad worker), who picked me up from the airport. He was honestly the friendliest person I'd ever met. He greeted me

with a huge smile, helped me put my bags in the taxi, and welcomed me to Senegal.

I'd arrived very early in the morning, so we took a taxi to a hotel to stay for a couple hours. At the hotel I met up with the other volunteers, who were just as nice as Habib. We introduced ourselves, and became friends almost instantly. After leaving the hotel, we took a taxi to our respective homes to meet our host families. Meeting and staying with my host family was by far one of the best parts of my trip.



When my roommate and I arrived at the house, we were greeted by our host mother with the biggest smile; and her two little children who had even bigger smiles. She led us to our rooms, gave us a little "tutorial" of the place, and then let us alone to unpack. After we got settled in, instead of just leaving us in our rooms, my host mother made an effort to establish a real relationship with us. We all sat outside together, talking, laughing, and getting acquainted.

We had to communicate through translations from my roommate who spoke French. The best thing about my host mother was that even though we didn't speak the same language, I could still feel her warmth and kindness. She asked about my family, my home life (I did the same), and we really got to know each other on a personal level, rather than a "visitor-host" level.

2 Week Special Community Project



For the first two weeks of my trip, I worked on two projects: Care and Community service. The Care portion consisted of me working at a Talibe Centre, for children either abandoned or sent by their parents to what was called the Maribu to learn the Koran. The centre, from the staff to the children, was great. The staff, including the other volunteers from Projects Abroad, was

like a family. Just as my host mother was kind, warm, and welcoming, so were the people I worked with.

Almost every person that worked there spoke English, so it was a lot easier to communicate. There were three departments that the centre specialised in: Health, Sports, and Education. When I worked in the health department, I spent a lot of time patching up and healing the children's wounds. This was the hardest yet most humbling part of my trip. From the different wounds and bruises I saw, the hard lives that the children lived were evident. At the same time, each child was so happy and appreciative of all we did.

The sports department just consisted of me playing with the kids, and just being a friend. This was really where I got to develop a relationship with the kids. We had an awesome time playing together. It was so funny because we didn't speak the same language, and had to come up with a sign language of our own to communicate.



The same was with the English classes that I taught as a part of the Education sector. I taught older students, around the age of 18, who I had an easier time communicating with than the younger students. It was still a challenge, but the challenge made the outcome a lot more effective and valuable. When I left, I had a personal connection with almost every student I taught. We exchanged phone numbers, Facebook, emails, and Skype. A few of them I still keep in touch with to this day.

For the Community service part, the Projects Abroad group renovated a Daara (the place where the Talibe are taught). Working as a volunteer group on this project really gave us a chance to bond. In addition, we worked under Senegalese who were local to the village in which we were building the Daara. It was awesome to learn the different styles and techniques they used to build and construct things. Bonding with the staff and kids that I worked with made my stay in Senegal so much fun, but also made it so much harder to come back home after the three weeks.

Other activities in Senegal

Outside of the Care & Community work, Projects Abroad had a number of activities for the volunteers to do. Each activity introduced us to different aspects of Senegal, and showed us a different piece of Senegalese culture. We took a glass painting course, and I was able to make a piece that I could bring home and show my family. We took a historical tour of Saint-Louis, which informed us about the true significance of the buildings and streets that we walked pass almost every day of our stay in Senegal.

And, my favourite part, we were able to take an African dance class. Taking the dance class gave me a chance to experience a huge part of Senegalese culture. I was so glad Projects Abroad gave this opportunity, because I was able to connect it to the African dance that I do here in my hometown. The staff were really great in communicating the location and time of the activities, and made sure that each volunteer got home safely after each one.

Read more : [Tarah's experience](#)



Tournoi ASF 2013 organised by Seth

Seth volunteered at the Care Project in Senegal. He worked at ASF, a centre that assists the street children by giving them medications when they are ill, treating their wounds, giving them lessons, providing them with snacks or juice...



Seth was really close to the Talibes children and enjoyed working with the staff at the centre. He has been working at the centre for one month. Before he left Senegal, He organised a big tournament for the Talibes. He bought soccer balls, candies, juices, a jersey for the best scorer and a trophy for the winner. The tournament has been a great success! Volunteers and staff were there supporting his nice initiative :))

The Talibes from Daara (House of street children) Abdou Rahman Mballo won the final, they were playing against the Daara "Ahmadou Ndiaye". They received the Cup, a soccer ball and candies! For their opponent, juice and a soccer ball! :)

It was a great day! :) Well done! Seth Hindley



More photos at : <http://www.facebook.com/tournoiasf>



Dirty Day: Saint-Louis Beach Cleaning :)



A Dirty Day was organised by Projects Abroad in collaboration with an association named "Week-end à tout Coeur" in Saint Louis. The aim was to clean and protect the border of the sea. It was Sunday 24th of February 2013, and all the volunteers and staff of Projects Abroad were there to give a helping hand to the young and dynamic Senegalese boys dreaming of the success of their country in keeping their



environment clean. We spent all day long there working and having fun with some local bands and it ended up with a joyful atmosphere. Have a look to our great photo album. Thanks to everybody who joined that big day! Peace, Love

More photos at : [Dirtyday](#)



Volunteers build a shelter for the Talibés :)

DONATION: Louise Tremblay made a great donation to ASF Talibes centre to build a shelter for the Talibes (street children). It is very helpful for them because they can use it as a classroom to do some drawing, painting or colouring. They will have juice and chocolate bread every Friday in that part of the centre too. Louise bought not only a new wardrobe which is used as a pharmacy to store the centre's medicines but also tables and benches for the learners. Great thanks to Louise

Tremblay for her very nice actions and we hope to see you very soon "Légui Légui"

<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=oa.519430411433750&type=1>



More photos at [Buildingashelter](#)



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Want to contribute in our newsletter?

Each month we will be featuring a photo from Senegal in the newsletter, elected by our Senegal Office Staff. If you are a former volunteer your photos are also welcome. Show off your best shots!!

Send your pictures to: habibdiaw@projects-abroad.org, finasenghor@projects-abroad.org

