

W.V.

On the 20th of June I left for a trip that I would not soon forget. When we departed from our church for the long car ride there, we made sure to stock up on plenty of foods and movies to keep us occupied on the way. When we finally arrived at Pipestem, West Virginia, where we would be staying, we got our first good look at the scenery. At the elevation that we were at I could see out for what seemed like an endless distance. The mountains cut the clouds like knives in the sky; the view was breathtaking. I would have never thought that this mining state would have such incredible beauty, especially with its history of slavery and mining.

When we started our service and learning we met Greg who would be our work site manager. He showed us to the place where we would be working. It was at a person named Rebecca's house. She lived in a small house that we would be painting for the following week. She was going to be fined if something wasn't done, and since she didn't have the income or time to paint her house she would be put into debt with the government. On top of this she was taking care of her one daughter and her very dependent mother. She didn't work most days because she needed to take care of them, so her husband would work long days. With all of this she still managed to keep her hospitality and smile. While we were there we also learned that if we didn't construct a railing to the stairs behind her house she would lose her insurance. So it was easy to see her dilemma. This kind of thing isn't just confined to her local area. In fact West Virginia is one of the most poverty-stricken states in the U.S.

What I learned on this trip was about the state of the U.S. in some areas and that it needs a lot more attention than it's currently getting. All in all though the people there are some of the most welcoming that I have ever met. I hope that more people will learn that poverty is a big issue and it isn't a rare thing. So maybe poverty can be slowed but I don't think that it can ever be eliminated.