Morgan Peebles
Merrell Thomas Marshall Memorial Scholarship
Essay

Impossibilities that Lie Ahead

I am so grateful for each of these little babies and the joy they have brought me. My heart is breaking though. Since I’ve been here, just three months, there have been fourteen new children who have come. Don’t get me wrong, it’s great that there is a place like Amani that is able to take in and care for them; but it’s terrible that these kids are at a point where they need to be cared for by people other than their relatives. It’s a joy every time a new baby arrives because we welcome him or her into the Amani family, but at the same time it’s tragic. Heart breaking. Wrong. Unjust. But there’s hope. And that’s what needs to be focused on and proclaimed…Join with me in crying out to our King and Father on behalf of the children whom he never leaves and always loves but the world has forgotten.

– April 14, 2013

Just a year ago, my heart was broken for the children in Uganda growing up without a suitable family. This excerpt from my blog portrays my deep hurt for the injustice that exists in children’s lives around the globe- the epidemic of AIDS breaking families apart, the habit of fathers leaving children behind with an ill grandparent, the problem of mothers forced to choose which child to feed and which to let starve because of a scarce food supply. These very stories are ones I encountered while living in Uganda for a semester volunteering at an orphanage called Amani Baby Cottage which cares for children less than five years of age.

While my passion regarding social justice remains with orphaned-children, my intentionality grows beyond it. On January 8, 2013, my journal reads, “I question why I am even here, so I pray God brings direction and purpose.” God has answered my plea for direction and purpose by opening my eyes to the possibilities of my future. Ultimately, I know I will advocate for social justice oversees, working with orphans in some capacity, but as of now I have learned to be intentional and purposeful where God has me. My pursuit of a degree in business and entrepreneurship will be a vital asset in addressing these social justice issues. I know I have the ability to love children without furthering my post-secondary education, but earning a degree creates greater opportunities and allows for more strategic work in combating social injustices. It is a privilege to be able to learn, experience, and grow in order that I may be of greater benefit to my campus, community, and society in the future.
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For now, while I am at school, I take part in Student Voluntary Services as a Program Coordinator. It is a joy to encourage peers to live their lives for a higher purpose than themselves and to watch them grow to love volunteering and in turn decide to devote their lives to helping the community. I am also involved in Navigators, a Christian organization on campus passionate about producing men and women with strong character and humble hearts through relationships, recreation and discipleship. As a member of the discipleship team of the Navigators, I am intentional about creating relationships and reaching out to students on campus to encourage them in discovering their identity and purpose.

Being a part of these different communities within Ball State University has grown me in unimaginable ways. As a student I have gained a great appreciation for education that did not exist prior to college. My passion for learning so that I can have a more impactful life has driven my studies and allowed learning to be enjoyable and exciting. As a student I have grown to appreciate the vitality of asking thoughtful questions and the importance of utilizing my professors’ wisdom, experience, and knowledge as a valuable resource. As a leader I have noticed I am capable of more than I thought possible. The amazing and abundant resources available on Ball State’s campus have expanded and pushed my limits to possibilities previously thought to be impossible. As a leader I have learned humility and determination, enabling me to accomplish tasks with effective communication, strategic planning, and collaboration with partners, rather than brute force. Finally, as a citizen I have become aware of not only my responsibility to society, but also the privilege of my responsibility to society. I have the honor of being part of the movement to better society and the blessing of reaping the benefits.

Already I have seen children reunited with previous families, children adopted into new families, children nursed back to health after being in a skeletal state, children given hope for a future through the opportunity of education. I have seen men’s lives transformed from addicts and prisoners to leaders in the community through the organization Muncie Mission, children given role models and tutors through various after school programs coordinated through Student Voluntary Services, and college students find passion and purpose through involvement on Ball State’s campus. I have shared in the blessing of not
only seeing these joys, but being a part of the change that occurs in people’s lives. My experiences thus far at Ball State have motivated me to live an intentional life, striving to dissipate social injustices in society. I have seen a glimpse of the transformation that can occur, and the potential for change greatly exceeds my hopes. This is just the beginning, and I am more than excited to conquer the impossibilities that lie ahead.