

## *My First Trip to New Orleans*

Coming to New Orleans for the first time was very nerve racking at first. I was fine and then as it kept getting closer I was getting more nervous, but also excited at the same time. When we got to the school where we were staying, my nerves started coming back. It wasn't in the best neighborhood and it still wasn't completely renovated from after the hurricane. After we got settled in, I was calming down a little more.

By the next morning, I was excited and ready to go to work. Getting to the house, the spray-painted 'X' was still on the front of the house, which made it all the more realistic. The house was completely gutted and cleaned already. Our job was to prime, paint and install new doors. It felt great to be doing all this knowing that we were in the final steps of the house and the owner would be able to come home soon.

For our last day of work, we helped move a man back into a new apartment for the first time post-Katrina. He had been living with a friend's daughter since after the storm. The feeling while helping move this man back into his own apartment was uplifting and fulfilling. I felt like we were helping him get his life back together and on track.

In our free time, I bonded and got to know people I either didn't know before this trip or didn't really talk to. I got to learn how to work with people from different backgrounds and with different personalities. From this trip I have made a stronger bond with my best friends and a bond with new friends.

I walk away from the experience with a better understanding of life and myself as an individual. It helped open my eyes to new and exciting things and lead me to meet several new and different people. As a first timer, going to New Orleans, I would strongly recommend anyone who is able, to go on this trip.

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