

Hello, I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Elizabeth Sullivan. I'm a rising junior at Marist College in Poughkeepsie NY. My mom, dad, twin sister, Lillian, and I became members of St Cross in August 2012 just before I started high school. The following summer Lillian and I were able to travel with the 13 other J2A kids on a pilgrimage to Italy. It was on this trip that I learned how valuable traveling to other places, other countries, can be.

This was reinforced when I was fortunate enough to spend the first four months of this year (my spring semester) in Athens studying at the American College of Greece (ACG). I met people from all over the Middle East, Africa, Europe and even a few from the US. They were young men and women from Syria, Iran, Afghanistan, Western Sahara, Egypt, Turkey, Sudan, Eritrea, Greece (of course), Iowa, New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Minnesota, and Washington.

I want to share a special experience I had while at ACG. I was selected to participate with a special community service program sponsored and run by ACG – the Meaningful Engagement Trip (MET). Each semester, 30 ACG students are invited to participate on a MET. This year the trip included visiting Greek drug addicts in rehab, visiting what is called an SOS Children's Village and interacting with the Social Workers, Psychologists, and children at the village. The rest of the trip was focused on environmental issues and we visited wetlands, an environmental observatory and a hydro farm.

I assumed that all of us on the trip were either regularly enrolled students completing a four-year degree or students from abroad studying for a semester. I had no idea that 7 or so of my fellow MET peers were also refugees. I learned this as the weekend unfolded and they became comfortable enough and trusting enough to share their stories.

I came to learn that they were students who had received scholarships from a program called "Education Unites: From Camp to Campus", organized and supported by the U.S. Embassy in Athens to assist and support refugee students to continue their educations. These people, my peers, who fled their homes to escape war, violence and oppression applied for the opportunity to give their time and energy to others less fortunate than themselves. Despite all they had been through, they still had the compassion and empathy to give of themselves to others who needed love and support. I was inspired; then saddened when I learned the U.S. Embassy scholarships that supported these "Education Unites" students would not be funded again.

I have experienced firsthand the integrity, compassion, and commitment of these young men and women who have worked so hard to restart their lives and restart their educations. Help raise 19,000 dollars for a scholarship that will be given to a fellow student who is a refugee. The scholarship will allow one student to earn a US accredited bachelor's degree. My MET group has committed to raising enough money for one scholarship. Once collected, the money will be sent directly to the ACG program coordinator.

Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Respectfully,
Elizabeth Sullivan