

St. Lucia

"Many aspects of the trip to St. Lucia will remain with me. The first centers on the most accurate adjective for the island, beautiful—beautiful nature, beautiful people, and a beautiful Creator of them both. The natural beauty of St. Lucia is captivating! I witnessed the single most beautiful sunset of my life during the second week of our stay, as well as many other sunrises, sunsets, beaches, and coastlines that will forever remain with me.

St. Lucians are beautiful, too. The faith of the people is astounding! The first morning when we met our driver, Mr. Bellas, Sr. Mary Lee asked him how he was and he promptly responded, "I'm blessed." Not, "I'm fine" or "good" or "a little tired" but "I'm blessed." It didn't matter what was in store that day because whatever it was, God in His faithfulness would provide. Stories of this kind are numerous.

During my stay in St. Lucia and amidst the beauty of the island, I experienced poverty I could have never imagined. Our special project of serving the poor, elderly Ms. Daphne had a distinctive place within my heart and the hearts of my team members. The challenge of building an addition to her house was initially overwhelming; however, in the end it became a source of strength, humility, and joy. We were committed to improve Ms. Daphne's situation in any way we could with the resources we had before our time in St. Lucia expired. It was an incredible blessing to be part of Ms. Daphne's life, even if it was only for a short time.

God has begun to mold my heart with a passion for the poor as a result of this Common Venture service trip. My experience in St. Lucia has awakened me to the needs of the poor in our world, revealing to me more about my vocation. Still weeks after returning to the States, I continue to pray for clarity in how it is that God is calling me to serve the poor and impoverished while lifting up those in St. Lucia who struggle daily to meet their basic needs.

Charlotte Schumacher

Student at Briar Cliff University

Common Venture volunteer in St. Lucia, West Indies

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"I shared with our wonderful hosts in St. Lucia that I returned to my apartment here in New Orleans, sat down, looked around, and unexpectedly burst into tears. I did not cry out of happiness to be home, but out of the emptiness that comes after the challenge is over, and the "ordinariness" of life is felt. I recalled the lines of a poem that I learned in grade school. "if you can fill each hour with sixty seconds worth of distance run...then yours is the earth and everything on it, and what is more, 'you'll be a man, my son.' I thought: I won't be able to sustain the high of St Lucia, but I can do something! I really miss my hammer and paint brush, and so I rejoined the Habitat team here in New Orleans, and for two days each week I look forward to hopefully feeling the joy of getting into the race and running the distance. Thank you for allowing me an experience that I will always cherish. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to open myself up to receive God's gift of inspiration."

Peace and love,

Sylvia Robinson from New Orleans

Common Venture volunteer in St. Lucia, West Indies