Did the trip influence your knowledge of and perspective on the host country/city/community?

Most definitely. I went into this trip with the (common) view of South Africa being a fairly well-off country. I expected to see more equality between the people, and for race to not be that prominent of an issue. However, I was greatly mistaken. I found the majority of South Africa to very much still be a developing country rather than developed. I learned and experienced how greatly apartheid has created negative effects on the equality between people in the society. Additionally, I saw the side of South Africa that is very much hidden from the rest of the world. After apartheid, many people view South Africa as this prospering land in which people of all races work and live together. However, in my experience, I found that strong racism still exists in many areas, as white people continue to view and speak of black people in negative ways. Additionally, I saw the many poor areas within the country, both rural and urban, and it was an extreme shock to see that people actually live in such desolate conditions.

Did the trip influence your view of yourself?

The trip definitely pushed me to think about my own personal beliefs and lifestyle. Mainly, I thought about my views of race. While race is still a huge issue in America, I tend to not think about it much. Also, I usually look at inequalities based more on socio-economic differences rather than the color of one's skin. However, being in South Africa really pushed me to think about the concept of race and how it has affected people's health, work, families, environment, and quality of life. This trip also made me reflect on how lucky I am to have been born in America and have had all the opportunities that I have, but also how little I tend to fully appreciate such things. Despite the fact that most people have very little, the people of South Africa all seemed to be very proud and thankful for what they have.