



My Hope

By Kelly Smith | April 3, 2012

I have now been gone from Cape Town, South Africa for as long as I was interning there, but I miss the people, the sites and the adventures no less. Merriam Webster defines to miss as “to discover or feel the absence of”, and I discover new ways that I miss Africa every day.

Sitting in a classroom at the University of Montana with the IE3 program directors I couldn't comprehend what they meant by reverse culture shock. I didn't understand upon returning I would miss dodging mini buses riding to work blasting South African House music, arriving at work and being greeted at the gate by children awaiting my return, spending the day facing the realities of life in Khayeltisha and returning home to fourteen roommates. I didn't know the extent of what I would have to miss when returning home and how hard it would be to leave a life that I knew I would never be able to return to.

Arriving home on World Aids day I realized how much my world had changed. Now the harsh realities of life were no longer just issues that I once had empathy for but issues I will forever compassionately fight for because they are truly a reality for me and those I have grown to love in Africa. Interning in Africa enriched my life in so many ways but most of all it opened my eyes to a new lifestyle. A lifestyle where adventure is in constant pursuit and the false perception that an unenjoyably nine to five office job is inevitable doesn't exist. The fact that I am writing this sitting in a Villa in the countryside of North Italy, where I now live, can attest to how Cape Town has changed my lifestyle and only increased my desire to explore the world and meet all the beautiful people that will be placed in my life during this pursuit.

