Seventeen Hour Flight: Volunteering in South Africa

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Cape Town, South Africa

- Cape Town is the second most populous city in South Africa, after Johannesburg
- Cape Town was first developed by the Dutch East India Company as a supply station for Dutch ships sailing to East Africa, India, and the Far East
- Table Mountain in Cape Town is believed to be one of the oldest mountains in the world

Oakhaven Place

- Oakhaven Place provides high standards of 24-hour residential care and nursing within a home-like environment
- Oakhaven strives to promote quality of life, maintenance of independence, and the preservation of dignity
- Oakhaven provides services that range from independent living to full frail-care provision for between 50 and 70 residents

Skills Utilized/Developed

- Humility: When working with or for people it’s important to be humble and accepting
- Diversity: Within the city of Cape Town many different race/ethnicities reside as well as a large socioeconomic gap between the high and low SES
- Sustainable change: It was important for me to understand that the service I provide is sustainable and not just charitable

Outcomes

Cross Cultural Solutions provided a volunteer opportunity at an “old age” home in a coloured township in Cape Town, South Africa. I worked alongside the recreational therapist in leading exercises to increase flexibility and promote mobility and movement among the residents.

Project Information

- Facilitate group recreational therapy exercises
- Assist activity director with coordinating and executing daily activities with residences
- Implemented mood therapy through interpersonal conversation and cosmetology

Lessons Learned

- Don’t be afraid to try something new
- The world is as big as it is small
- Race has never been and will never be apart of someone’s biological identity, but for now it is a large part of someone’s social identity

Advice

- Everything is relative
- Discovering a different part of the world can help you discover a different part of yourself
- If you have the desire to do something you’re more than half way towards completing it.

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Cape Town, South Africa

Population
- United States: 296 million
- South Africa: 51 million

Life Expectancy
- United States: 78 years
- South Africa: 56 years

Exchange Rate
- United States: 1 dollar
- South Africa: 10 rand

GDP
- United States: 16 trillion
- South Africa: 0.38 trillion

Literacy Rate (age 15 and older)
- United States: 99%
- South Africa: 93%