

At 7pm, we rocked out to some bizarre tunes at the coffee house but decided to pull the rip cord early and quit while we were behind since the featured act wasn't coming on stage until 8:30pm. We staggered back to the church, managing to avoid any additional gastric adventures for the rest of the evening.

Thursday, August 4

Day 5



We got to sleep late (7:45am) this morning and fixed some pancakes with the extra time we had. We left the church just before 9am to get to the T and then take our first T bus through Somerville, Harvard Square, and then Brighton to arrive at Cradles to Crayons (C2C) just after 10am, just in time for our orientation.



C2C was a serious operation, with shelves and shelves of donated clothes filling a large warehouse. For the first hour, we put large bags of clothes in the proper shelf space. This activity included

breaking down the largest cardboard boxes that any kid would love. Thankfully, the weather wasn't too hot outside, making the warehouse

bearable. It wouldn't have been so just two weeks earlier when we set heat records in Boston!



In the second hour, we wrote inspirational notes that would be stuffed into 27,000 different backpacks for underprivileged youth in Boston. There are actually over 100,000 youth who could qualify for the backpacks (which would be stuffed with school supplies as well), but C2C could "only" accommodate 27,000 students.

C2C was quite an operation compared to other non-profit organizations we've worked with. They were clearly well-resourced, had more than enough clothes to sort through, and had plenty of volunteer staff to help out.

At noon, we began the trek back to Charlestown, arriving around 1:30pm. We packed picnic lunches and then headed up to the Monument to play some more football and Whiffleball. The whiff game was culminated in the last inning by Chris St. George's Homeric



headlong dash from second on a ground ball to Sammy (the Thug) Sugg, sliding headfirst into home just as Sammy's throw pelted CSG on the arm. Before a massive argument could erupt, an innocent passerby determined that CSG's arm had gotten in ahead

of the tag, calling him "Safe!" As they say in Charlestown, "Game Ovah!"

We then headed back to Copley for a relaxing Jazz Service at old South Church. The hour-long service was not only inclusive but also uniquely

inspirational. The highlight moment was singing "Lean on Me" in the middle of the service and then getting a brief tour of the church, including the incredible organ and amazing woodwork.

On the way home in the T, a woman was singing in front of the Orange Line. We dropped her a few bucks and enjoyed the beautiful Boston moment.

Since Taco Tuesday never happened, it was switched to Taco Thursday! What a hectic meal! Throwing everything together for a nice 9 pm meal. And a wonderful meal it was.

After dinner, Ben, Kelley, Ryan, and CSG made a massive amount of cookies! Kelley had a bit of a mental breakdown but all was ok :) and YUMMY!!!!!!

Friday, August 5

Day 6



Today we left early in the morning to go to Dorchester (aka, Doah-chesta) via T . There we arrived at the John Holland Elementary school to help underprivileged children. Principal Jaquille Henderson and Summer Program Coordinator Eric

Holland were there when we arrived, and they led us to the cafeteria where the students were gathered. Contemporary music was playing from a set of computer speakers at one of the tables. It was interesting to see



how integrated the different grades were as the group of smiling young faces jived to the beat. They sure could boogie. When the cha-cha slide



started playing, a few of the kids dragged us by the arm to the dance floor. Their warm friendliness, contagious happiness, and willingness to extend themselves to complete strangers was amazing. Almost our entire group was dancing in a matter of seconds. It was a blast. Alex, an eight-year old boy, eagerly taught

Ryan a new dance, making him feel like a part of the community.

The teachers explained that getting the kids moving is an important way to get their brains moving too. Soon afterwards, we trooped upstairs to assist the teachers with Math, reading, spelling, and other subjects for a few hours. The children were very well behaved and there was clearly mutual respect in the classrooms. While it was a hot day out and the kids were extremely anxious to go out and play, they still did what they were told and managed to become very good friends with us even during classwork time.



In the afternoon, we lucked out because it was Field Day, featuring a massive basketball game pitting the students (and CSG and James) vs. The Teachers. CSG led the kids' team scoring with 16 points and 0 assists, while James rejected a few teachers, much to the delight of the students.

We then transitioned to a free-for-all game of dodgeball. If there was an adjective to describe it that word would NOT be fair, safe or balanced. Imagine 100+ elementary school students with balls. Aimed at their teachers (and us). It was absolute mayhem.



Sammy the Thug and Koderia the Killer were particularly devastating. But, the kids ultimately prevailed in both games!

Particularly rewarding was the instant attachments many of us made with the children. They were SO excited to see new faces and didn't want us to leave. The time spent with the kids -- although exhausting -- was incredibly fulfilling in a whole different way than the rest of our service activities during the week. Saying goodbye was bittersweet, to say the least.

By 3pm, we were spent. The sixteen of us dragged ourselves back to the T and arrived back at the church around 4:30...after a pit stop at 7-Eleven for a Slurpee and a slice -- and the brain freeze that accompanies such a



drink! Since we'd gone through almost \$1,000 of groceries by then, Barbara cooked us up some Fettuccini Alfredo with the remaining food! We then topped off the meal with a 2nd visit to Emack.

We closed our daily devotions with some reflections on the memorable moments of the week, including the following quote from Teddy Roosevelt that encourages us to put ourselves out there:

**"The Person In the Arena" by Theodore Roosevelt
(From a speech delivered in Paris in 1910)**

"It is not the critic who counts, not the person who points out how the strong person stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the person who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by the dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly;

who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions and spends oneself in a worthy cause; who at the best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who, at worst, if they fail, at least fail while daring greatly; so that their place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory or defeat."

Saturday, August 6

Day 7

We got to sleep in again this morning before devos, breakfast, and cleaning up the church basement. We moved out of the church by 10:40 and headed towards Harvard Square via the T, arriving around 11:30. Most of the group had a hankerin' for Pinocchio's pizza (despite having just eaten breakfast a few hours earlier) and that fine dining establishment was happy to accommodate us.

We then moseyed back onto the T towards Porter Square to catch the 1:30 train to Lincoln, arriving right on time in Lincoln into the open arms of our loved ones. Jim Newton's car barely held all our stuff after he picked it up earlier in the morning!



What a memorable trip!

Fascinating Factoids

- The average age of a homeless person in Massachusetts is 9 years old.
- Many homeless people have trouble once they receive individual housing because of the loneliness caused by the sudden loss of community.
- Many homeless suffer from addictions (*e.g.*, alcohol, drugs) and/or mental illness; but most do not lack dependable sources of food, clothing, or shelter.
- Most of the time we give money to a panhandler, the money will go to feeding an addiction. Giving food, or clothing, or a T pass, is a better idea.
- When a person becomes homeless, it's often due to a variety of factors (*e.g.*, loss of income, estrangement from family, alcoholism, *etc.*) rather than one cataclysmic event.
- Often, when an individual breaks the cycle of addiction, it's after they reach their own self-professed "bottom"; to break the cycle, the catalyst is often one event that differs for everyone.
- Children's test scores increase after they've been physically active immediately preceding their test.
- John Harvard was once a pastor for the First Church of Charlestown. His statue in Harvard is modeled after a commoner, since there are no living records of what John Harvard actually looked like!
- Please add your own Factoids that we may have omitted: