



SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE

September 17, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my great pleasure to have had the opportunity to work with African Encounter for the past two years in bringing college students to Cape Town (South Africa) for educational service projects. The inaugural project in March 2009 was so successful and well received by all concerned that we repeated the same project with different students in March 2010. A third group of students are currently being prepared to do a similar project in April 2011.

Our previous groups spent 14 days on each of the trips working with preschool children and their teachers in Red Hill Township near Simon's Town. We helped each morning in the schools with curriculum activities and the daily routines of the classroom. Afternoons were spent on cleaning and maintenance of the schools and planning the activities for the next day. Several excursions were also planned for the volunteers on the weekends including Table Mountain, Cape Point, and Boulder's Beach.

We chose to work with African Encounter because they offered unique, custom-made and all-inclusive trips for varied interests and needs of our students. They worked mightily to ensure a smooth, enjoyable, and above all an educational experience. The students themselves will attest that this is a "once in a lifetime" opportunity to interact in a very meaningful and authentic way with children and adults in their own environment, and that it has had lasting effects on how they view the world. The excursions and the interactions with people met along the way added yet another layer to this rich, sensory experience that can be as up close and personal as one wants to make it.

Michael Massingham and the staff at African Encounter are incredible in orchestrating the logistics of trips such as these; moreover, they accomplish all this with good humor and ready smiles! The accommodations at the Team House are delightful with incredible ocean views, wonderful food, and helpful staff. The physical layout is perfect for groups such as ours for team building activities, working on lesson plans and projects for Red Hill, and overall collegiality. Not only did the all-inclusivity of the trip take much of the worry out of arranging the details for the student group and their advisors, but the overall cost of the trip is very reasonable, including the transportation, food, lodging, and excursions.

I highly endorse entrusting African Encounter to plan and implement trips with the utmost of care and integrity. I may be reached at 619-421-6700 ext. 5624 or at mholmes@swccd.edu.

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