



## Girls Inc. Trip 2014 New Orleans

### Girls:

Kelsey  
Amina  
Maryan  
Habiba  
Khadija  
Tori  
Deja'nae

Amber  
Dana  
Sabrina  
Anab  
Tiara  
Kitt  
Hawa

Empress  
Amari  
Fatuma  
Nicole  
Hinde  
Jeronicka  
Sakira

Sarah  
Maya  
Hailey  
Asnina  
Mychael  
Samantha  
Eboné

### Chaperones:

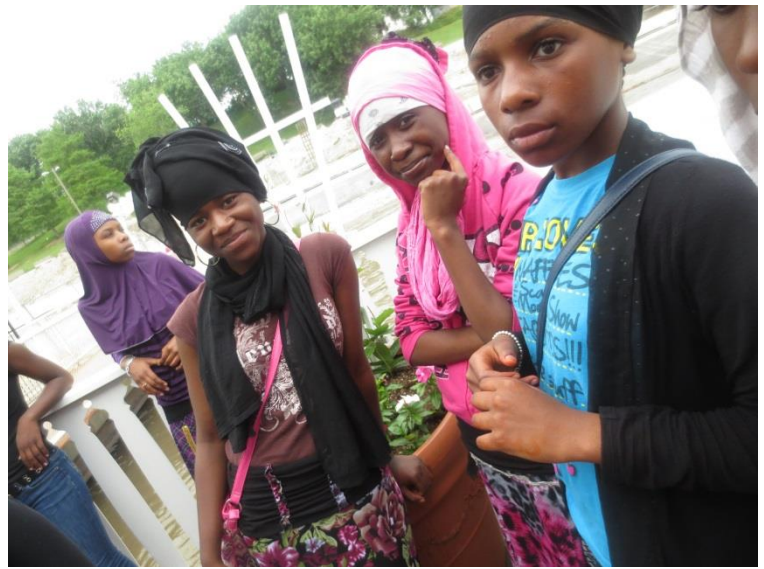
Ms. Bev, Ms. CT, Ms. Tess, & Ms. Roberta

### Going on the Trip

I guess I should be honest right about now. I didn't want to come on this trip. I would have rather been working. My mom made me go on the trip because she thought I would have fun and because I should get more involved in Girls Inc. I didn't want to come on the trip because I wanted to stay with my mom and my sister. When I got on the bus I wasn't as excited as everyone else but now that I am here, I am glad my mom made me come. I've met new people, visited new places and had loads of fun. If it wasn't for my mom, I wouldn't be here and for that I thank her and want to tell her myself. – Kelsey

My name is Deja'nae, I am 13 years old. I have been going to Girls Inc. for 8 years. I like Girls Inc. because it has given me lots of opportunities, this trip being one of them...What I hope to get out of this trip is an experience to see places I've never seen before...I hope to take plenty of pictures and capture lots of memories. I'm nervous about being on the Mississippi River because I am afraid to be on water traveling, but I know it's going to be worth it. One thing Girls Inc. has taught me is that in order to gain experience sometimes in life you have to take risk and step outside of your comfort zone. – Deja'nae

I have been anticipating this trip for a long time. I've never been out of the state before so this is definitely something new and exciting. – Sarah



I'm glad to go on this trip because new girls are coming and we can start knowing them, just like the California trip. It was really fun. The girls got along very well, North and South. Some of us actually became friends with the other girls. I hope the girls that are new on the New Orleans trip have full respect for others because I would love for everyone to have fun on the trip. If they respect me, I will respect them as well. - Habiba

I wanted to go on this trip because I've never been out of Nebraska to any states! When I heard we were traveling to Missouri, Tennessee,...and Louisiana, I thought why not take a break from Nebraska and go on this trip with some of my girlfriends! I thought this would be a good opportunity to go out and explore other states and their rich history. And I get to get away from home and sleep in hotels which I [have never] done. Girls Inc. provides us with so many opportunities and I try to take advantage of all of them...At Girls Inc. I did many things and programs that I enjoyed. I almost never got in trouble and I always did my homework. Ms. Tess called me and my sister to participate since we never got in trouble. I also thought this trip would be cool since both centers were going. I thought maybe this could be our chance to get rid of the feud between North and South Girls Inc.! - Amina

I feel thankful to be included in this trip because I am young and the older kids treat me nicely. – Dana



I want to go on the New Orleans trip because I have never been out of the state. – Nicole

If I was never in America I would not have had this chance to go to places like this, and to meet new people and to have fun with everyone....I am happy I had a chance to come to a place like this and when I say that I am trying to say Girls Inc. Girls Inc. has taught me lots of things and they even made my life feel special. They taught me right from wrong, too, and now when I got to New Orleans I will have a chance to learn more than I know right now. I want to go to the trip to meet new North Center girls so I can treat them like family. - Anab





I wanted to go on this trip because I wanted to get out of the house and go to a different state. I have never been away from my house...so I wanted to try out the new adventure and see how it goes. At first...I was scared and I will miss my family a lot. But then...a few days before the trip, I just wanted to get out of Omaha...I've only been to 1 state before and that was my cousin's wedding in Kansas City, Missouri. [My sisters and I] only stayed there for 2 days. I am really excited to go on this trip and enjoy nature and different states. I've always wanted to go to different states and now my wish came true. A lot of people in the summer got to places around the world, but for the past 9 years of my life I stayed in Omaha during the summer and I wanted to take a break and get out. – Maryan

I want to experience the southern life for myself instead of seeing it in movies and on TV...In the southern United States there is a lot of history and stories to be told. - Sakira

This trip means a lot to me. I mean it is more than just a sight-seeing and informational trip to me... It is more than a "I want to go because it will be fun" trip for me. This trip is a culture breakthrough for me. I am going to college for sociology and music, so this will bring information and experience...It will begin changes in my life changes and responsibility for me to live on my own...This is what it means to me:

- 1) My mom has tried all our lives to make sure we are well-rounded and have experiences. Lately she's been worried about making up for what happened the last 6 years. She's been through a lot over the years, so knowing that we are having a good childhood and finishing our high school careers off well. It makes me happy to know that she is happy.
- 2) My step-dad wanted us to go. He's been there for us non-stop for two, almost three years.
- 3) My sister and I wanted to spend time together and have fun before she leaves for the summer.
- 4) Myself. I knew there were going to be irritating moments just like any trip and that is why I came, on top of the fun and educational factors...To explain why, I am trying to overcome my bipolar tendencies to form into full blown bi-polarism. I am doing that by controlling my anger and frustration. But I also want to experience different cultures. - Sabrina

I wanted to go on the trip because I thought it would be a fun experience for me, to go someplace other than home. ...For me to have the experience I've never had before...To talk to people I've never talked to before, to make new friends and communicate with others. To have fun without my little brother by my side. – Amari

I would like to go for the...scenery...the food... and people's accents. With this trip I would like to be one less ethnocentric person, and maybe a change of environment will make a change in my persona therefore making me a better person. – Empress



I have never been in a hotel and this will be my first time. – Asnina

Why did I want to come on this trip? In all honesty, I really didn't want to. Don't get me wrong, I'm really thankful that I got to come and I'm glad I did. I just...I've never been away from my parents this long before. I was scared; I still am. I think the only reason I finally decided to come was because my brother told me to. He said that I'd have a good time and I'd get to see a lot of new things. He is always pushing me to try new things. Plus he told me I had to go so I could buy him stuff... - Kitt

The reason I wanted to go on the trip was because I thought I could learn a lot and interact with girls and make new friends. – Jeronicka

I also love to travel with my friends and have fun...These are some of the best times and the times we share some of the best memories together...We can enjoy it while it lasts. - Sakira

I want to go to the Girls Inc. trip because I love Girls Inc. Also, I love the teachers and staff that work with us. I really want to spend the summer with the Girls Inc. staff because they always know the right thing to say. This summer I planned on just sitting around and watch T.V., but Girls Inc. gave me the opportunity to spend 9 wonderful days with my amazing friends. This is my first Girls Inc. trip and I plan on enjoying it all the way. – Hawa

I want to have fun and enjoy my time with fellow Girls Inc. members. - Eboné

I've never really been out of the state of Nebraska and I would love to try new things, and try new foods I've never had. - Hailey

This trip was a must for me because my mentor, MS. Roberta, has never been to New Orleans before so I thought it would be cool to share this experience with her. On this trip I hope to gain more friends and bond with more girls like we did on the last trip. I feel like I will learn a lot and gain a lot of memories. – Mychael

I am one of those people who likes to learn new things and have new experiences. - Fatuma

The New Orleans trip will help me experience another culture and will be an opportunity to hopefully learn about and understand the traditions and historical value of the area. It will help me get out of my comfort zone and learn about someone else's way of life rather than barricade myself in the life I am accustomed to. - Samantha

## Leaving Omaha



It is approximately 6:45 a.m. We just left Girls Inc. and are currently headed to New Orleans, Louisiana. And thus begins the longest journey I've ever been on without my parents. If I am being totally honest, I'm terrified. I told my mother (who is prone to expressing her emotions openly) that she was not allowed to hug more or become sentimental in any way. I was concerned that her tears (which are inevitable) would cause me to become emotional. - Kitt

Today was a day I was hoping to happen all week. I love coming on a Girls Inc. trip...I know I am going somewhere I have never been before. I love that feeling when we are all on the bus because I know I am with people who aren't my family except Amber. I am growing up so much. – Kelsey



When I woke up today I was excited. I couldn't wait to go to Girls Inc. I ate breakfast then brought my things to the bus. When I saw the bus I was even more excited. – Amari

So today when I woke up I was as excited as can be. When my foster mom Ms. Gloria announced it was time to get up I jumped up and said that today is the day we go...At 4 a.m. we got up, got dressed and went out the door.- Hailey

We prayed to have a safe trip. – Anab



Ms. CT was nice enough to give me a ride to Girls Inc. I asked her what time she was going to pick me up. "4:15 a.m.!" Come again? – Ms. Roberta

As we entered the bus I couldn't wait to go explore the road. As I sat, I put my headphones in my ears, relaxed, shut my eyes, and let the journey begin. - Hawa

It's probably cliché or at the very least incredibly geeky to compare this journey to that of Bilbo Baggins in **The Hobbit**, but that's what I'm going to do. I feel a little bad for whoever is reading these journals of mine because they're going to be geeky...sorry. - Kitt

Today we left Omaha. I can't help but get a jittery sensation thinking about all of the things we will do. This is my ancestry for goodness sakes! ...I miss my mom but I know in nine days I will see her again...This is a once in a lifetime opportunity and I am glad I go to Girls Inc. to be a part of them. - Tori



### The Bus

I told the girls to line up single file to get on the bus so we wouldn't have a mosh pit. I was even going to assign an order to the line. Mychael told me, "We don't don't need a lineup, Ms. Roberta. We can do this civil-like." She was right. No bus-boarding injuries. – Ms. Roberta

We're on the bus talking about how much fun we are going to have. – Deja'nae

The bus is big and good. - Anab

I took a nap and now we are watching

movies. – Kelsey

Mr. Gary is a good bus driver. He had to get us through (and back up through!) some tough spots. On one of our history driving tours, we were in a tight spot and literally could not move the bus forward. Some helpful Samaritans pulled out a jack, jacked up the car on the right side of the bus and literally moved it out of the way five or six inches. We were very happy but I'm not so sure about the car owners... Another time we approached a bridge with a height limit. Mr. Gary actually got out of the bus to eyeball it. He proceeded to drive through it VERY slowly. I held my breath. I am sure that my breath-holding was the very thing that helped keep the bus just that smidge low enough to get under the bridge. That's how close it was! – Ms. Roberta

We got on the bus and I let Dana sit with me because she reminds me a lot of my little sister Lacy who I miss dearly. It makes me appreciate her more when I am way from her for a long amount of time. – Kelsey

My day is wonderful because it is peaceful and quiet on the bus. – Dana

We were on the bus about to watch a movie but we had to turn it off because it had too much cussing. - Eboné

I only used the bus bathroom once, and that was a mistake. It smells bad, it's tiny and it's hard to figure out how to turn the light on. Some girls used that bathroom, like, every 30 minutes! I don't know how they did it. – Ms. Tess



The ride was very long so I went to sleep and when I woke up, we were still driving. – Maryan

Sarah and Nicole were the first girls to ask for the atlas. I told them that I love girls who love maps. It's true. – Ms. Roberta

So far this trip is going great. There're nice girls on the bus and awesome movies and food, of course. – Hinde

I just learned that the air conditioning on the bus doesn't work...which is kind of a bummer. – Kitt

We are now watching a movie about Elvis Presley. It is pretty interesting. I didn't know that he was a twin but his brother was still-born...I like learning about different artists, especially popular ones like Elvis. His voice was different and very interesting. I think it was sad that he died at 42 because that is such a young age to die. It is crazy that people would think he could still be alive because obviously he died. He was buried and has a grave. I guess people don't want to let him go. – Kelsey

We are listening to the Heartbreak Hotel song. I love this song...When learning that Elvis was shy at first, it reminded me of myself but now I'm more open...Every time we see Elvis sing he does that weird thing with his legs...I think Elvis looks like Johnny Cash....I think **Jailhouse Rock** is the best and first movie I have seen that stars Elvis. – Amber

We passed a drive through daiquiri shop...I don't understand why that even exists! You can't drink and drive! Why? Why does that exist? – Kitt

Overheard: "Every year the seats get shorter." – Ms. Roberta

The movie "The Great Debaters" reminds me of the museum that we went to that was talking about slavery. Whites don't like the blacks but the blacks still stood up for themselves. – Asnina

We just finished watching **Disturbia** – my first scary movie ever! - Kitt

The long bus ride reminds me of the first time I came to America. When we saw our names on the board [of those] traveling to America we were really excited and kind of scared of the strange people of the new land. I was honestly scared to death of people who were any shade of white. Back in Africa we used to run away from the white volunteers or workers when they came. We were terrified of them because we were so used to seeing a darker shade of everyone and it was weird to see someone white. Consider it like seeing a ghost! It was like seeing a ghost. When we heard the news, we decided the day we leave we will kill and the chickens we have raised and invited all the neighbors, which we did. The first transportation we got on was a bus. I didn't know it at the time but I was really carsick every time I got on a bus. It slowly wore out as I got older but it comes sometimes. My dad had to sit with me on the buses all the way to the airport. At the airport I saw a man eating what I now know as Chips Ahoy cookies. I guess I was really hungry, which was something usual, but he noticed me watching him and gave me one batch...When we got on the airplane I was

terrified because it was my first time on a plane, and eating 3 meals a day. I also sat with my dad because I guess I had airplane sickness [too]. When we got to the first house we lived in in America, I still couldn't believe we left home. The first school I went to was Jackson Elementary School. I was still terrified of white people so it was hard for me to get along with kids and teachers. I had to deal with it sincere there really were no places to hide from them. After a while, with the friendly grins, and after noticing they're not monsters and aren't going to eat me alive, I began to get involved with them also. My teacher... was so nice and gentle with me even though I might have been rude more than a couple of times. The only thing I liked at school was when it was time for lunch. I for once had at least 2 meals a day. I, to this day, still remember some of the songs I





learned in kindergarten. At this time, I used to dress as a regular kid would. Shorts, pants, tank tops, shirts and no scarves. As I got older, these things completely changed. When we went to the playground to play some of the kids would play tag and to they'll tag me also. I thought these kids were hitting me so I would chase them and hit them back hard. They [would] usually start to cry and I'[d] get sent to the office. I didn't know how to play the game! I wish I could apologize today. I was taught if someone hurts you, you hit back and I did which got me into trouble. – Amina

I really liked the movies, especially *The Little Rascals*. My boyfriend is in that movie and my best friend Raven Symone. - Hinde

The ride on the bus was OK because none of the girls got an attitude with each other. The movie that we watched was good. – Habiba

I've learned about 50 new sleeping positions while being on the bus. – Samantha

The back of the bus is loaded with water, juice, fruit, snacks...Ms. CT tried to sell Ms. Tess a bottle of water for 50¢. #Scam – Ms. Roberta

I had a problem sleeping on the bus when [the guide] was talking. But I always have a problem with my sleeping. I wake up in the middle of the night...I knew I was wrong for falling asleep. – Maya

Upon returning to the bus I noticed that the man in the semi beside us was naked. I could only see his upper body so I'm going to give him the benefit of the doubt and assume he was/is only ½ naked. - Kitt

I helped Ms. CT refill ice in the coolers. Ms. CT was very grateful for us helping her with the cooler. – Amber

I started off my morning by watching **The Little Rascals** (love that movie). I spent the rest of my morning listening to music and napping. Right before lunch I discovered some music on my brother's iPod that I was previously unaware he had...classic rock! I now have a new respect for him. - Kitt

### St. Louis – Riverboat Ride



On the first attraction we went on a riverboat cruise. We took a tour on the Mississippi River and learned a little bit about the history of St. Louis. - Tori

The water was soothing. – Kelsey

I really enjoyed that boat...It was fascinating to know about the Mississippi River. - Hawa

The Riverboat was amazing and I learned lots of new things. – Fatuma

We went on the boat ride and we learned about the Mississippi River and I got to see all of the different bridges. One of them was the Martin Luther King Bridge. – Amari

I loved the boat. It was big and lots of people were on it. I loved learning about the bridges and they told us things we didn't even know. I was happy to learn about those bridges...The Mississippi River is not a clean river. It is really dirty. – Anab





I also have a fear of traveling on water. But guess what? I went anyway. I'm glad I went, too. It was very interesting. My favorite part was...seeing the different bridges and the graffiti. – Deja'nae

The boat ride was cramped and muggy, but relaxing. – Sabrina

On the Riverboat Ride we went under a bridge that was built in 1864...Rail cars [used to be able ] to go under the car section of a bridge but over time rail cars have gotten bigger to where they are not able to fit anymore. – Sakira

When we went on the boat ride we thought the boat was moving but it really wasn't, it's just that when you look at the other boats moving you would think that yours is. - Habiba

Even though it was cramped, it was cool to see the historical buildings. I know it wasn't part of the tour, but the graffiti itself was like story. It was cool to not only see the history of the buildings and the people working in them but also the stories of the people around them. - Samantha



## St. Louis – The Arch

There were big steps up from the river and the Riverboat Cruise up to the Arch. Ms. CT said she could hear the theme song from Rocky in her head going up those steps. – Ms. Roberta

The wait for the arch was ridiculous but after I realized that it was very educational and was a great experience – would I do it again? Absolutely. - Empress

After waiting about 40 hours we finally were able to get inside the Arch. It was a wild ride up and back down. - Hawa

When we got to the pods that took us up and later back down, I was a bundle of nerves. I have never really liked tight places but





once we got moving I felt better. I liked looking down from the top because it reminded me that there are places in this wonderful world of ours to experience what we actually do in our everyday lives. You are more aware. – Kelsey

We had to be in a long line but the line was moving fast. It was five to a cart. When we were going up, everybody was screaming. I'm calm. When we got to the top we saw everything. - Eboné

I'm scared of elevators and heights and that's basically what the Arch is. I'm going to have to find a way to get over it though. – Deja'nae

Everyone in our shuttle was screaming. It was very loud in our shuttle... I was very nervous at first but now that I finished it through it was a great decision and I would come again. – Amber

I enjoyed how we went to new heights on the Arch. The ride was amazing. Although we all were a bit scared I think we all enjoyed ourselves. - Sakira

Even though I have been here 3 times, I've never been inside it. The wait was long but in the end it was worth it. I was anxious going up and down in the pods, especially when you are going up 630 feet. I was a little uneasy about it but I wouldn't trade the experience for anything else. But that was my first and last time doing that. - Mychael

When I was on the arch, it reminded me of the Titanic. Thank god the same thing didn't happen. – Hinde

The view was incredible. It was like being in a plane but without the terrible sound. – Samantha

I have been on the Arch two prior times. Of my three experiences, this was by far the scariest. It was so crowded at the top – very claustrophobic. And the air felt like all of the oxygen molecules had already been breathed out of it. I – along with most of the girls – was happy to be back on the ground. We were brave; we did it; now time to move on to City Museum! – Ms. Roberta

I just got off it. I have to say it was one of my favorite experiences. I'm glad I went on it! Maya and I were so terrified to get on, but we did. If we had a choice to go, I wouldn't have gone and I would have missed out on a perfect experience. I'm so proud of myself. – Deja'nae

I was really scared going on the pods. But I thought about the long wait and there's no turning back now. - Tori

The view was amazing. I could see everything. I didn't even want to go at first. I was actually really scared. But I need to try new things and honestly I would do it again because that is the most exciting thing I have ever done. - Sarah

We went up the Gateway Arch in a tiny elevator with five seats in it. My group of 5 was freaking out while going up but was calm coming down. ..The videos were very interesting. – Amina



When we did the Arch I was scared at first but I conquered my fear thanks to the encouragement of Ms. CT, Ms. Tess, and Ms. Roberta. I appreciate you guys being so positive on the Arch field trip. - Jeronicka

The St. Louis Arch TERRIFIED ME! But I pretended that it didn't so as to inspire the girls to be strong, smart and bold. ☺ - Ms. Tess

At first I was scared to go on the arch but it was actually really neat. - Tiara

I was terrified and I am still shaking. – Hailey

OMG that was the most scary ride ever. When I rode it I was screaming because I thought the thing was going to break because the seats were going back and forth. Maryan, and Amina were all scared. When you look out the window are the top of the Arch it looks like we are going to be looking like little ants that run around everywhere looking for food. - Habiba

...nerve-wracking...- Sabrina

Pretty cool. – Khadija

We ventured up the St. Louis Arch...It was easily the most terrifying/traumatic moment in my entire life. I am afraid of heights, elevators, ferris wheels, and confined spaces. The Arch hit all of the necessary bases. Oh well. At least now I can say I did it. Hopefully we don't end up at the top of any confined spaces reached via elevator/ferris wheel. As long as that's the case, the rest of this trip should be a walk in the park. - Kitt

I learned the St. Louis arch symbolizes the...Gateway to the West. - Asnina

We went to the big arch and by big I mean BIG...I was scared when I got on the elevator. - Maryan

It was big and I was nervous. Especially when we got on the car-like machine. I thought we were going to break down but I remembered a quote from Girls Inc. – we have to be “strong, smart, and bold.” - Fatuma

It was amazing. - Dana





## St. Louis – City Museum

Oh! My! Gosh! The City Museum was so much fun. At first I was a little mad that I was stuck with Amber, but then we had some fun. We went on everything and we took a lot of great pictures. I know my mom will be proud that we took some pictures together and acted like the sisters we were born to be. I loved this day so much. I can't wait for tomorrow. – Kelsey



Super dope. Hands down the best museum I have ever been to. Empress and I climbed everything possible, but after I hurt my knee I told Ms. Tess and Ms. Roberta that I was DONE. But I had fun. – Mychael

I loved every part of it! We had so much fun in the ball pit. – Deja'nae

It was a blast. There were lots of scary things but my sister told me no to be scared so I got over my fright of heights. We had amazing things and we learned new things. Thank you teachers. – Fatuma

It was fun because we got to do what we wanted to do. – Dana



You had to be brave to go on some of the obstacles. – Eboné

It is so big, cool, and fun! – Hinde

The museum was a workout as well as a sweat bath. WOW! I sweat out my hair, was sweating myself, tired, scared, lost & confused, but we also had an awesome time full of mystery of where the next tunnel is going to take us. Yes we did get a little scratched and bruised but that's alright. – Sakira

It was super fun. – Hawa



...I found it really fun. It brought out my childhood...I loved it here. – Sarah

Best event yet! I absolutely loved the museum. It was a great time for my sister and me to be kids. – Sabrina

The museum is actually better than the museum at Omaha. The museum can actually teach kids new stuff that we have never learned before...the museum was really awesome. – Habiba

I loved watching the girls play in the City Museum. Those teens are absolutely just big kids at heart still. – Ms. Tess

Mychael and I had a very good time at the museum. I burned a lot of energy...-Empress

The City Museum took the thought of a 'museum' to a whole new level. There were twists and turns everywhere I went. It was so cool to climb all the jungle equipment and I am glad I went. – Tori

That was the most fun I have had in a long time. It was great to actually be a kid again. I loved exploring all the hidden nooks and tunnels. The slides were really fun so it makes up for ruining my Vans. It was more of a workout than I have gotten in about a month. – Samantha



I crawled all over the outside and got to see the rooftop. It was amazing. It was the best day ever! – Amber

I went down a big slide in the museum. It was fun. And long. – Maryan

Oh my gosh it was so much fun. – Hailey

The funnest museum I have ever been to. Extreme fun! - Khadija

It was a good experience. It was like a huge cage with amusement slides and complicated tunnels. On one of the slides I got my shoe stuck and it was pretty funny. – Amina

We ended our day at the City Museum. It was the most amazing work of art I have ever had the privilege to view. There is no way to fully describe the magnificence that was the City Museum. - Kitt

I enjoyed spending time with my sister which I may or may not admit to anybody. – Kelsey

I had the best time ever. - Dana

## Memphis – National Civil Rights Museum

We are about to go into the Civil Rights Museum. Apparently there are a lot of facts about Omaha in the museum. I bet it will be super interesting. – Kelsey



The Lorraine Motel is where Martin Luther King was assassinated. - Amber

I saw a lot and learned a lot – from the beginning of slavery to the end and the racism to follow. We learn about African American history in school but not this detailed. It hurt my heart to see, hear, and read what my African American ancestors endured for our freedom and the fight for civil equality. I realized how strong these people were. Slavery lasted for more than 250 years and more than 12 generations endured this harsh life of being slaves...I really enjoyed the museum and when I have kids I plan to bring them here because it is a very important part of history that EVERYONE should know and learn and experience what I just did. – Mychael



There were a lot of stories on the wall that I knew about, but I never realized how connected they all were. I never realized just how many African Americans were transported here or just how little they were valued. I guess I never really absorbed the impact it had not only on the US but on the world...It's weird to see both sides of my family basically fighting the war of slavery and segregation. It's kind of uncomfortable...Museums have an almost magical effect of bringing textbooks to life. I love that. – Samantha

I can't believe what happened back then. I don't know what I would do if it still existed...The statue of the men on the floor chained up was really sad...I like how they set up the museum with the sound effects and the music, statues, and pictures...I think this was a great experience for me...It really opened my eyes and taught me a lot more about African American culture. – Deja'nae





The gallery was really sad. - Eboné

I walked through the National Civil Rights Museum with a few girls. They would point to displays and say, "So what does this mean, exactly?" And I describe the text in layman's terms and how important it all was. I probably drove them crazy trying to describe how significant all of the events were. But they stuck by my side throughout the whole museum, so I couldn't have been that bad. I enjoyed watching them try to understand how unfair things were in the past and contemplate what they would have done in those

situations. – Ms. Tess

We read some stories about civil rights and some of the things almost brought tears to my eyes. It is amazing how people treat other people...The inspiring thing is no matter how hard the struggle was the Africans did not and will not give up. They forced the public to hear them out. That's me when something is wrong and I believe it should be different. I don't give up til it's loud and clear. - Hawa

We watched a video about the basic history of the civil rights struggle. After it was over, we went into a room that talked a lot about the slave trade. There was a remake with mannequins about how the slaves were on the boat that brought them to the Americas. It was so lifelike it made me feel freaked out. It made me realize how close they were [kept on the ships] on the trip over. – Kelsey

Looking at the past made me feel [kind of] bad. Like I just sit there and think "How could my own blood do something so cruel?" – Sarah

I walked by Tess for a while and she quickly summarized a lot of what we saw. I really like Martin Luther King, Jr. so it was really awesome to learn so much more about him. The whole civil rights movement aspect of our history is really interesting to me, mostly because it's difficult for me to imagine people treating their fellow human beings the way that they did. - Kitt



At the museum, one picture stood out the most to me. It was in 1954. Isaiah Henry was beaten almost to death right after he voted. I wondered why he was after he voted and not before? If it was included in the paragraph it had to hold significance. - Tori

At the museum I saw where [Martin Luther King, Jr.] got shot and the room # was 306. I also learned a lot about slavery. Like the KKK will drag out [someone] who voted and hang and beat them to death. - Maryan

I didn't know where Martin Luther King was assassinated until today. The day he was killed he had a pillow fight with his friends. - Tiara



The United States was not a place for the colored people (blacks). The colored did not even get to vote for their rights and if they did vote, they could get murdered or killed. - Anab

We learned a lot of stories. – Dana

Martin Luther King was shot at 6:01. The ambulance came at 6:06. - Hawa



I learned many important facts...I learned more things about Martin Luther King. I also learned more about the Incans so I'm thinking of going back to school and helping my teacher about all this. - Hinde

We are learning about slavery and the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. - Hailey

I thought it was going to be boring but when we got into the museum it was a whole new world...I was amazed. So I learned a lesson – don't judge a place on your past experiences. – Fatuma

When we were there, I wanted to cry because it was so sad to me seeing all those people and hearing all those scary, sad, and terrifying things. I liked hearing it but it really hurt me inside. It really touched me at the Civil Right Museum. – Amari

The slaves were 3/5 of a person to the world. Well actually to the whites. – Habiba

A sad place to be in. - Khadija

The Constitution said, "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal." This quote didn't match what was being done in the country to the African Americans...I strongly agree that the Civil Rights Movement was like a little spark of change that continued to evolve with different freedoms that would later brighten our future. – Amina

One thing that intrigued me was how they preserved the room and the artifacts. Also, when I was in elementary school I was told that the killer shot MLK from the grass and ran which today I learned was false. - Empress

I just can't believe ¼ of my family history went through this. I am always interested in my family history. - Sabrina

A lot of slaves were brought from Africa by force. They were chained and brought with a boat. – Maryan

WE NEED PEACE. Not slavery and death. This world is like a whole big family. We work together. We all pray. No one wants racism. That's why it's called FREEDOM! - Asnina

I feel ashamed that my ancestors did this. – Nicole

In the second exhibit, I learned that before Africans got captured they had lots of culture and we not 'dumb old slaves' I assumed from history class. Slavery was most predominant in the Southern states of the U.S. Later on, after the film and the third exhibit, I found out that whites didn't want blacks to vote because they thought blacks we 3/5 human. Many people were killed due to voting. - Tori

The Klansmen started out with just 4 people and then members came like a flood, mostly working white men with nothing else to do but hate blacks for no reason. One man even said while on his death bed, "I had no reason for hating blacks; they never did anything to me" but yet you attempt to kill a woman and her family and a Reverend Abernathy by bombing their residence. Most of the people that were murdered were activists or a part of NAACP. - Empress

When I was at the Legacy Museum, there was a bubble with a quote on it



that said, "He who opens a school door, closes a prison. – Victor Hugo." – Kelsey

In my opinion it doesn't matter if you are colored or black. We're still humans and the only thing that is different is our color but that shouldn't change what you think about someone. – Tiara

## Memphis – Graceland



Graceland is on my bucket list. To prepare ourselves we are currently watching a biographical film about "The King." It's very interesting. We are also watching some of Elvis' classic movies. - Kitt

From the video that was about Elvis we learned that he started singing at the age of 2 at church and he became famous for his singing, but not only that but for his hair style. - Habiba

The entire museum consisted of his mansion and everything else built on it – his automobile museum, a museum about his movie career, and of his private jets... When I went into the gift shop I got a penny engraving that says "Taking Care of Business in a Flash," which was kind of like a trademark for him. I think it could be a good luck charm or something I can put in my scrapbook. – Kelsey



It was a blast. I saw lots of cool things like his outfits and his awards. – Fatuma

The fact that the upstairs was private & Elvis' private are of the house made me want to go upstairs even more. - Sakira

I had fun and it is awesome. – Dana

I have never seen a guy shake his hips the way he does. – Hawa

Overheard: "Elvis was the original twerker." – Ms. Roberta

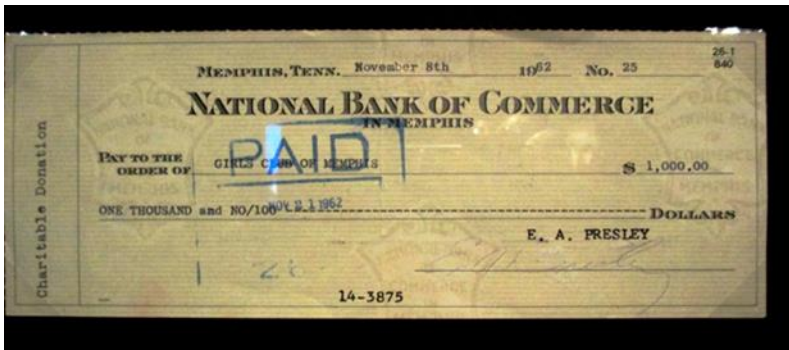
It was interesting. I've never been a fan of Elvis, but I guess it was cool for people to see he was just an ordinary person. - Samantha

Elvis' daughter is named Lisa Marie. She is still alive right now. She lives in California and she owns the house she was born in. – Habiba

My favorite part was his mansion and more specifically his meditation garden. His grave was really touching. I know because I wasn't born in his era, I will never fully understand how extraordinary Elvis Presley was, but learning all of this I got a better understanding. One fact I gathered was because of the dancing Elvis Presley did, his nickname was "Elvis the Pelvis!" – Tori

My favorite car of his was his purple Cadillac. – Deja'nae





Elvis is so cool. And a good singer. – Anab

My favorite part of Graceland was seeing that Elvis was a regular donor to Girls Inc. of Memphis (formerly Girls Club). Elvis was a smart philanthropist! – Ms. Roberta

It was so cool! Graceland was amazing! Elvis was super private – not letting anyone upstairs – which is cool. I am so glad we went to the auto museum. I got so many awesome pictures for my brother. His private planes

were sweet! I loved it all! His house was beautiful. It was depressing, though. We walked through and saw him live, then all of a sudden he was dead. I mean, he's been dead, but it was sad – like he died all over again. - Kitt

There are many pianos in the house. – Amber

A beautiful sight to see...I loved the car museum because I love cars and Elvis had an impressive collection. - Mychael

I wonder if Michael Jackson's inspiration was Elvis – with all those cool dance moves and stuff. – Khadija

My favorite part of Graceland was the poodle wallpaper in the bathroom. Excellent! – Ms. Roberta

[Elvis] had a lot of records and a lot of BEAUTIFUL clothes. They were so gorgeous. – Maryan

[Elvis] really did make a place in this world. - Nicole

The Lisa Marie airplane was pretty inside. – Maryan

The part I like the most about it was seeing the gravestones and probably the tapes that helped us know where to go and told us about all the different variety of things. - Tiara

Elvis got his first guitar at age 13. - Asnina

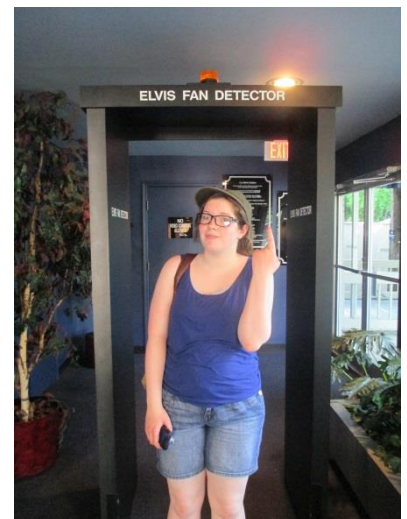
I wish I was little Lisa Marie with my own jet. I would have all my friends on there chillin'. - Empress

I learned that he died in his bathroom upstairs...He is buried in his backyard. - Amari

[Elvis] had many fans. - Sarah

I think that Elvis Presley was a guy who should have lived longer because he gave a lot of his money away to the Memphis, Tennessee community. – Kelsey

I notice that whenever Elvis sings he has to always dance very weird but people love it. - Habiba



## New Orleans – The Bridge over Lake Ponchartrain

As I am woken out of sleep, I look out the window to see water. I mean a lot of water. My first thought was “Who! This is really cool!” but now as I look and think of the water and the bridge, I start to freak out. This is a large lake...Also the fact that this...old bridge does not look like it can support this big bus. This really scares me. But I am trying not to think about all the bad things and ponder on the good side. Like for instance, I wrote so long that I didn’t even realize that we were off of the bridge and looking at all the palm trees. And the tall buildings are cool. When I first thought of going to Louisiana, I thought about swamps, alligators,...and good gumbo! I realize now that I was stereotyping and I should not have done that. I mean, sure, Louisiana does have swamps and various animals, but it also has other things like various big beautiful trees and lots of big cemeteries.  
– Tori



Ms. Tess was on her cell phone doing some fact checking on the safety of the bridge. That was her way of coping with big bridge anxiety. – Ms. Roberta

We are crossing the lake into New Orleans. It seems to last forever and it kind of scares me. I don’t like being on a bridge in the middle of a body of water. I have a little fear of drowning in a car stuck in the water. I know it won’t happen but it is scary to me. – Kelsey

The vastness of [the lake] is mind boggling. As we cross, it feels like hours and hours passing. – Kitt

I was frightened because big bodies of water scare me but I still continued to look at it and face my fears- Jeronicka

The bridge is the longest on a lake in the world. It takes 20 minutes to get over the bridge. - Kelsey

The body of water never ended. – Fatuma

Later our tour guide would tell us that some of his wife’s friends won’t drive across the bridge because it freaks them out. I guess our girls are in good company. – Ms. Roberta

I would be scared if we went past this during Hurricane Katrina. This would be dangerous. It is a very long passage. – Amber

This very large lake is nice but I am scared. It is huge and you can hardly see any land. Yes I was very terrified. - Sakira

I was anxious to get across that bridge. The water made it seem like we were never going to get off. – Deja’nae

I thought that bridge was never going to end. - Asnina

We just got back on land and we **LIVED!** - Kelsey

## New Orleans – The City & History

New Orleans!! Haha this is amazing. I am so happy I am here. My momma and grandmomma are always talking about New Orleans and the family here. It's crazy to be here. - Sabrina

I can see some of the city now and I am giddy with excitement. – Kelsey

It's the most beautiful place we've been to so far. I can tell this is going to be the best part of the trip...New Orleans got swag. – Fatuma

The palm trees are cool. I wish we had them in Omaha. – Deja'nae

All of these buildings are so unique. A lot of them don't look anything like what we have in Omaha...I would like to live here if I didn't know about the hurricanes. – Kelsey

Too many homeless people here. - Asnina

Canal Street is the main street of New Orleans...I learned that 350 French men were the first settlers of New Orleans. ...New Orleans was founded in 1718. Then in 1762 the Spanish owned New Orleans until Napoleon became the leader of France and demanded the Spanish give the [territory] back to the French. Napoleon sold the Louisiana territory to the Americans in the Louisiana Purchase. - Kelsey

New Orleans is built on marsh lands so the buildings are held together with iron rods – Kelsey

Cypress Trees are the state tree of Louisiana. – Hailey

I really want to go to Loyola and live here for college. - Samantha

They use light colors on their houses so they can be cooler. - Jeronicka

Louis Armstrong was born here...Dixieland Jazz music started in New Orleans – Kelsey

I was grossed out when I saw a huge rat. That was my first time seeing that huge creature. – Fatuma

I love the unique culture. The fashion is fantastic and artsy. I loved being here. – Sabrina

I really learned more about the Louisiana Purchase than I did in school... - Ms. Roberta

I didn't know there is no natural rock in New Orleans because the city is built on a swamp. To keep the building up they use a rod system, going through each building on the block. - Mychael

Louisiana is the only state that doesn't have counties but parishes. – Kelsey

It is the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase. - Sakira





New Orleans is extremely liberal while Omaha is fairly conservative; so I get to see not only different cultures but also just different kinds of people. There are hippies, gypsies, country, soulful, urban, bohemian, etc...types of music and attire. The various examples of people here makes me come closer to understanding just how different the world is compared to the neighborhoods I live around. It makes me feel really small and that is exhilarating. - Samantha

Poor neighborhoods are taking a longer time to recover from Katrina. – Khadija

There are a lot of voodoo stores in the city...Voodoo is a cross between Catholicism and black magic. – Kelsey

...I thought that New Orleans/Creole buildings only consisted of French and American style houses. But after the major fire in the French Quarter, the Spanish had a major influence on the rebuilding of New Orleans. French style was very simple and plain – a one-story home with roof windows. But Spanish style is my favorite. All the hard work and detail they put in making and sculpting buildings is magnificent and very intricate! What stood out the most and distinguished French from Spanish were the galleries. - Tori

I will miss this place. I learned so much and I hope to come back again one day. – Anab

### New Orleans – The Cemetery



The cemeteries have to be above ground because the water level is so high. – Amber

I...learned about these “courting a widow” benches -... called that because when a woman’s husband would die she would sit on this bench in front of his tomb and mourn his death. The courting part of it is because young men would look for a rich widow to court. – Empress

The most interesting thing to me was the above ground burial. It was just interesting to me because anywhere else, people are buried below ground. – Mychael



We learned about the Moriarty tomb I mentioned in my last journal entry which was cool. I guess that the woman residing in the tomb (when I say woman I mean a dead one) was in love with this man. Everyone talked about them saying that he only married her for the money – she was really wealthy. She dies pretty soon after the marriage which made people believe even more that he just wanted the money. To put the rumors to bed, he used all of her fortune to build her a tomb. It cost \$83 thousand then. Now it would be over \$1 million. - Kitt

The cemeteries are so extravagant and beautiful. – Kitt

At one graveside, I saw hot sauce and beer left as memorial gifts. I want that family. – Ms. Roberta

I thought the tombs were very interesting although I don’t agree with the whole “buried on top of land” thing. - Sakira



I really wanted to see the cemeteries so I'm really happy we got the chance to. - Samantha

A quote from Mother Theresa's [statue at the cemetery]: If you pray, you will have faith. And if you have faith, you will love. And if you love, you will serve. And if you serve, you will have peace. - Kelsey

A scary but interesting place. - Fatuma

## New Orleans – The French Quarter Walking Tour & French Market



We started the day with a walking tour. I really liked it. I thought it would be boring and tiring, but it wasn't. I really liked all the Spanish and "Creole" style buildings. I think my favorite buildings were the two-story apartments with the wrap-around galleries. I liked all the gardens and botanicals. They had a variety of plants, such as banana plants. - Tori

Our tour guide knew a lot. He sounds like he has been doing this for a long time. He sounds like he has to remember a whole play...I appreciate how he goes through everything so we can get as much out of our time here as possible. - Kelsey

Today we went on a tour but walking and I thought it was going to be boring but it was actually fun and historical. We got to learn new things about the buildings in New Orleans. - Habiba



The nice tour guide gave us magnificent explanations. - Fatuma

Our tour guide, Jim, told us a great story about his friend, Joe, a couture hat-maker. During Katrina Joe refused to evacuate. He was afraid his hats would be looted. He brought in supplies, food, water, flashlights – whatever he needed to hunker down and wait it out. Jim and his friends would tease Joe by calling and saying, "We saw some fashionista looters headed your way!" Funny. Jim was funny. He asked, "Does that make sense?" a lot during his history spiels. The girls would nod. - Ms. Roberta

The French Quarter was wonderful! I feel bad that I'm buying things and having a great time, but there are homeless people sitting across the sidewalk with nothing. I think it is something to pay attention to and a reason to be appreciative of all we have. - Samantha

I thank the tour guide because he told us a lot. - Anab

During our walking tour we saw the place where **Streetcar Named Desire** was written. - Kitt





I enjoyed the French Quarter walking tour. I am happy we went in the morning because it was cooler than it would have been if we went later in the day. I learned a lot...I thought it was cool how the [area] had a mix of French and Spanish styles...New Orleans has the oldest active Catholic cathedral. When I went inside, I thought it was beautiful. - Mychael

I loved the walk and out tour guide. He told me new facts that I didn't know before. - Tiara

We left our hotel at 8:30 after breakfast and went on a walking tour that was unbelievably painful. My shoes did not match the length of the trip. - Amina



When I heard that music while in Jackson Square/Garden/Park I wanted to run and see where it was coming from. Music is everything to me and Louisiana has the best history of soulful jazz. When we walked down those steps leading to the cathedral and saw where the music was coming from, I couldn't help but smile. When they began to play **Amazing Grace** my heart smiled because it reminded me of my Grandma Elizabeth Brumfield. - Sabrina

We learned the difference between balconies and galleries - galleries are attached to the ground...We also learned what the legs of horses in statues being lifted signifies. Right front leg lifted means that the rider died of natural causes. Left front leg lifted means the rider died of wounds inflicted in battle. Both front legs lifted means the rider went on to do great things. - Kitt

I really enjoyed the shopping and seeing all of the different cultures and ethnicities of the South. It shows that there are not just a few ethnicities but many in one area. - Sakira

We heard some live Dixieland music on our tour. Cool! - Ms. Roberta

I enjoyed the tour guide. He was very informational. I like how he said if you don't want to try something you would use words other than "disgusting," like "interesting." And I learned that not all of New Orleans was affected by Katrina. - Empress



I want to thank our tour guide for showing us around and telling us facts about historical New Orleans. I love his accent. While we had free time I bought some souvenirs. - Deja'nae

We had a break and went shopping in the French Quarter Market....I was paired with Khadija and she bought a really pretty skirt. Then we kept looking for a voodoo store because Kitt wanted to buy her brother a shrunken head. We never found one but it was nice of Kitt to think of her brother's request. - Amina





I got a bracelet that says, "I ♥ New Orleans" and 3 postcards...I postcard has a beignet recipe. I got these postcards as a memory for my memory book. The beignet recipe one is for my foster mom. – Amber

I walked around with Amina and Khadija...While walking around, we looked for a voodoo shop where I could buy a shrunken head for my brother. We got really lost! We stopped and asked this woman for directions, but as soon as she started talking I knew she couldn't help us. She was from Australia...Not super helpful in New Orleans. She told us to ask the people in the coffee shop because they were helpful. We asked and they were super friendly but we got lost trying to follow their directions. We stopped in a Po-Boys shop to ask for directions again. They were really nice and helpful. We found the shop. It was the shop of that really famous voodoo priestess our guide talked about. We went in...The lady yelled at Khadija for filming/taking pictures. She also gave me a dirty look when I asked about shrunken heads... - Kitt

I was very appreciative that Ms. Roberta was able to trust me and Amari to go off on our own and see the area for ourselves. Thank you. - Sakira

I got to see all the houses and learned about the different people who lived or live in the houses and some of the people who have passed away. - Amari





## New Orleans – the Cajun Cooking Class

We just got done making jambalaya. It looks so delicious.  
– Kelsey

The chef was hilarious... I want to give him an extra thank you. I enjoyed the fact that we sat with the North girls. I really liked that. I tried some food that I have never tried. I didn't want to try but Ms. Tess pushed me so thank you.  
- Fatuma

The cook is so funny. He really interacts well with us....He did a demonstration of the Bananas Foster. He showed us how the thing can make a fire. It was so cool. He also threw pinches of cinnamon at the fire and it sparked. – Kelsey

Ms. CT is being very funny with the cooking teacher. – Amber

The cooking class was extraordinary. The chef was hilarious and made a lot of jokes throughout the class... I tried some new food and also enjoyed it. The food was full of so much flavor that makes you want to savor the food for a while. I think everyone should try new food because it can turn into something you would never imagine. And we have recipes. Don't forget that! - Sakira

Oh my lord! Never have I had food so delicious in my entire life! Wow! The guy who taught us (Kevin) reminded me a lot of my dad which was nice because I am really homesick! He (Kevin, not my dad) made AMAZING food! I bought my dad a bunch of stuff because he loves cooking so I figured, "What they hey?" I hope he likes it all. – Kitt

He made me challenge myself and my life. He made me feel like I have hope to be successful. - Jeronicka

Too much voodoo stuff here. – Asnina

At the New Orleans Cooking School, everything was fabulous. From the pralines, to the corn & crab soup, the jambalaya, to the bananas foster. The chef is what made it a fun, funny, enjoyable dinner. He schooled us on the tradition of New Orleans food and where it came from. But he engaged with us, talked and laughed with us, and it was just fun. I loved every minute of it. Chef Kevin literally made my day. - Mychael

The chef was so outgoing and hilarious. I actually thought it was going to be boring but it was so much fun...It was nice to see everyone cooperating and listening and laughing their heads off. It sure did bring the group together in a unique way. To be honest, I think he made each and every one of us







feel special in some way or another. He was truly AMAZING and I think we made a big difference in his life since he only has sons. – Amina

Mr. Kevin was hilarious...When he said they eat for the conversation he was totally right and with that my table talked about him and his cooking. - Empress

We kept making jokes and we were all cracking up. – Dana

Kevin was hilarious and if I am not mistaken he and Ms. CT were flirting! - Samantha

The food reminded me of [my Grandma]... It's been 5 years since my Grandma Hattie Brumfield has cooked jambalaya. This trip has completed so much and unlocked memories I haven't been able to remember for the grip. - Sabrina

The food I tried was corn and crab bisque, pralines, and jambalaya. Very scrumptious. – Amber

I think the girls would take Mr. Kevin over Emeril Lagasse. – Ms. Roberta

...delicious pralines...like heaven in your mouth. - Mychael





## New Orleans – Mardi Gras World

We are watching a video on Mardi Gras. Mardi Gras means Fat Tuesday. – Kelsey

We saw the floats. They were really good. They had one of Abraham Lincoln, Belle and the Beast, and Elvis. They were all so life like. – Kelsey

I tried on a cute [costume] and took a lot of pictures. I loved this the most from the day. Amber

Maybe out of the whole trip my favorite part was looking at how they made the floats. - Maya

The King Cake was yummy...It tastes like a donut. – Amber

I liked dressing up. – Deja'nae

The floats were really amazing. Riding on one would be so cool. I should come down for Mardi Gras sometime. - Kitt

I loved how detailed all of the floats were and I can't wait until I turn 21 (the recommended age) to go to Mardi Gras. - Mychael

Floats start about 2 days after Mardi Gras and go on 'til Mardi Gras so it's a full year of designing parade floats. The floats can't go in the French Quarter because the streets are too narrow. - Hailey

I got to taste their cake. To me it tasted like cinnamon rolls. – Amari the float. Also, I learned that sometimes the working conditions are bad. In the summer it is really hot and humid, and in the winter it's cold. Even though the conditions aren't the best, they are still expected to have a great master piece...I've always known the traditional colors of Mardi Gras (purple, green, and gold), but I never knew the meaning behind them. Purple is the symbolic reference of Justice; green stands for faith; and gold means power. This definitely changed how I think about Mardi Gras parades. - Tori

I enjoyed seeing not only the finished product but also the process of building and constructing all the different floats and themes. It must be mathematically challenging to find the ratio aspect o

They celebrate Mardi Gras for up to 10 days. - Hinde

I like this site because it is fancy...I love it there because I love art. – Dana





I liked the masks and the costumes of the Mardis Gras. They were very beautiful. Also, the faces and cartoon characters that were made out of paper maché. They were very cool and creative. – Maryan

I learned that the [floats] they ride on in Mardi Gras have bathrooms because they are on those for a really long time. – Amari

I learned how they make the statues – all the processes they go through, the materials they use, how long it takes to make them... - Amari



### New Orleans – the Swamp Tour

I was very scared to get in the boat but when the boat started moving [I wasn't] scared any more.

As soon as we started moving we saw the alligators. – Kelsey

I was scared because that was my first time being in a place surrounded by alligators and different kinds of animals. I thought they would want to eat me because I am so good looking. LOLZZ. I think if I was an animal and I saw myself I would think of chicken. But I am glad we did that. I think that was really fun and I am excited to do more of these things. - Hinde

It was very exciting getting up close with the alligators. One thing I learned was that alligators are as fast as a horse on land and as fast as a shark in the water. Altogether, alligators are fast amphibians. - Tori

I was scared on the boat because an alligator came close to me on the boat. – Dana

The bayou was my favorite...The bayou reminds me so much of my Grandmama's stories of growing up down south. I just feel connected...If I could I would take the bayou tour again. – Sabrina







I loved the view of the alligators and the stories [the guide] told...I enjoyed all of the great facts about them that I wouldn't have known. Like I wouldn't have known they hatch about 35 eggs and the dads try to eat them whenever they get the chance to eat them. – Tiara

I was scared because I don't like alligators. I can't even go in Kingdom of the Night [at the Omaha Zoo]. – Eboné

The swamp tour was an adventure. A lot of us were scared of the bees and wasps, but I thought it was hilarious. I am not a fan of nature but the swamps were beautiful. – Sakira

I especially enjoyed when we were all silent. Listening to nature and only seeing the animals and trees was so peaceful. I wish I could go out on a boat here with only myself, one other (preferably not annoying) person and the nature of the bayou around. I could spend the rest of my life with the alligators and birds. It would be wonderful. – Samantha

It was a little fearful because there were a lot of snakes, spiders, alligators, and etc...So in my head, if we fell we would be stuck with those mean animals, which was nerve-wracking. – Maya

Our guide said you can chew sugar cane like gum which I was unaware of. He also told us that Cajun kids got punished for speaking French in school because the teachers were trying to integrate the backwoods children. – Kitt

I liked the Spanish Moss hanging from the trees. – Kelsey

I was scared. I thought we were going to crash the boat and then the alligators were going to eat us...I was proud that I did it because I need to overcome my fear...Hailey

The bayou was beautiful and relaxing...It was interesting hearing all those facts about alligators and the marshes. When he was telling the story about himself and the 2 men he had hired, when he said he heard the hissing noise by his feet I thought he was dead. But I had to realize that he couldn't be dead because he is standing here telling us this story. – Empress

Anab and Hinde got so scared. That was funny. – Asnina

I learned that Spanish Moss is not poisonous and it is not a parasite. If it gets thick it will kill the trees because it suffocates them. – Amber

I liked hearing all the wonderful sounds when we got quiet because it was so peaceful. – Maya

We heard what it sounded like when we were all quiet and it was the most beautiful thing I have ever heard...the highlight of my day...-Hailey

The alligators were very pretty. And hungry. – Maryan

I really liked the boat man's stories. – Asnina



Mr. Roland of the bayou was so cool! He had awesome stories, he was really nice, and his accent was spectacular. He told us a lot about spiders: wolf spiders, banana spiders, brown recluses, and black widows. He told us that banana spiders are unaggressive....Mr. Roland...told us about how secluded they were when he was a kid. They had to take a boat to school and to the dances. Whoa! - Kitt

The swamp tour gets a thumb's up from me. - Mychael

We...had great contact with Mother Nature. The boat ride was very nice and peaceful once everyone was quiet. Amina

Mr. Roland told us lots of stories about himself and his experience with alligators, spiders, and copperheads. He showed us an alligator head that was really heavy with really big teeth. Mr. Roland killed 7 copperheads in one of his confrontations...It was really funny when he told us when he was little he heard a male alligator and he dipped out of the marshes, scared! - Amina

I was kind of scared that [the alligators] would get us or splash us...Our tour guide told us that when it is hot the alligators will come on land and rest but when it is gloomy they are always in the water. - Amber



Mr. Roland was an awesome tour guide for the swamp and I absolutely LOVED his accent. - Mychael

I learned the difference between alligators and crocodiles. Alligators, when they close their mouths their teeth go in holes. When crocodiles close their mouths, their teeth stick out. The difference between male and female turtles is that the females backs are more "up" and look like a camel's hump and the males' backs are more flat. - Maryan

### **New Orleans – the rainy drive**

It was really rainy and flooding. Due to that, we skipped the plantation tour for safety reasons. There was a tornado watch. - Kitt

We were riding on a flooded back road with fields on each side that we also flooded. - Empress

I am really scared right now because we are driving and it looks like it's going to storm and I'm freaking out right now. It's raining really hard and I am scared. Why can't we just turn around and go back to the hotel? Why couldn't we stay in New Orleans? OMG I am so scared it's going to flood because the crops are already flooded





and so are the streets. You can't even see out of the driver's window. Can't we stop at someone's house and go to the basement and stay there until the storm is over?...We're turning around...-Hailey

Well the weather got really bad, so we're not going to the plantation anymore. I was really looking forward to that, but I'm going to take Ms. CT's advice. I'd rather be safe than sorry. – Deja'nae

One of the roads is so flooded they barricaded it off. There was a car floating with water up to the windows. Time to turn around! Good call, Ms. CT. – Ms. Roberta

It's unfortunate that the raining and flooding cancelled our plans, but I love weather and nature just as equally as I love history! They're both rich in lessons and hidden memories from other people. They tell a story and its more beautiful than any man made sculpture. It's why I love history so much. Seeing the things people go through and how they deal with it is wonderful. It makes all of my mundane problems seems so insignificant and manageable. - Samantha

The other side of New Orleans gets flooded with just a little amount of water. Thank Allah (swt) that we got out safely. Also than Fatuma and Hinde. They were reading the Quran that would benefit us from harm. - Khadija

### New Orleans – Café du Monde

A very flavorful place. I really liked their beignets and hot chocolate. – Fatuma

We had beignets...I love it. – Dana

I enjoyed the donuts. I loved them! – Deja'nae

The donuts were delicious and tasted like funnel cakes. – Maryan



Café du Monde was really good. The beignets were like a fancier funnel cake. I like seeing all the French signs and descriptions because it gives me a good reason to put what I learned in class to good use. I've been able to translate street signs and restaurant names/menu options which I think it great! - Samantha

I really like the donuts. I forget what they are called. I think it is something like beignet. – Hinde

The beignet and hot chocolate were very good. Even though there was a lot of sugar the dough was wonderful. The way they make beignets is very dangerous if they are not careful. They roll the dough very thin and stack them on top of each other. The next step is very dangerous. They carelessly throw the uncooked dough into piping hot grease. The grease splatters everywhere. - Tori

I got to taste beignet and it was very tasty. To me it tasted like funnel cake. We also got to see how they make it. They get [dough] then they smash it, then roll it, then throw it in grease, then when it gets golden brownish then take it out, put it in a paper towel, then pour powdered sugar on top and eat.- Amari

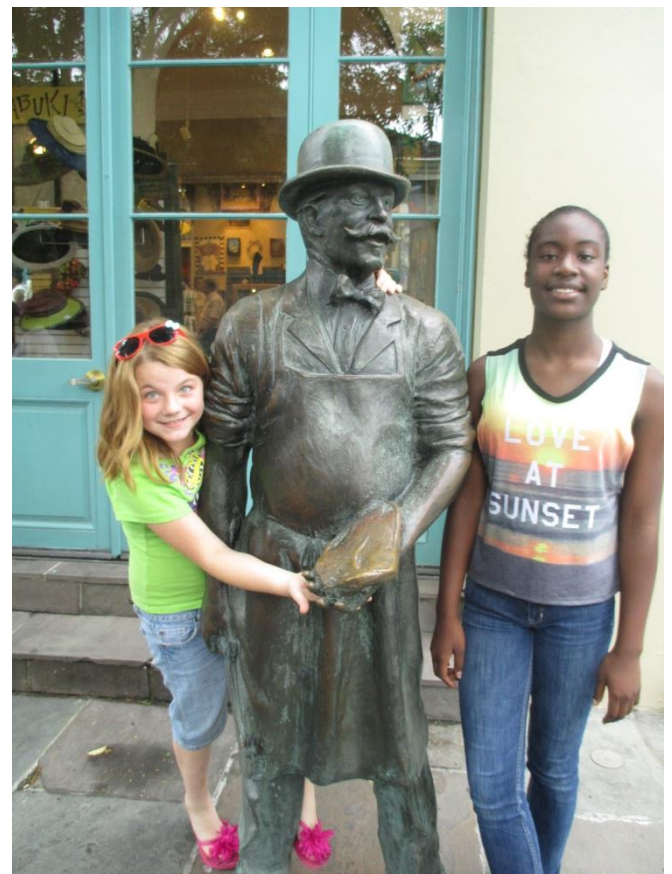
The beignets...Oh My God! They were like a party in my mouth! The coffee was really bitter but still really good. – Kitt





Yes, Lord! This was a great stop. Yesterday I passed a coffee shop that promoted “the Best Freakin’ Coffee in New Orleans.” I badly wanted to stop but knew that I could not let my own personal caffeine addiction impinge on the girls and their activities. I walked past the coffee shop. Ok, I stopped and took a photo. And smelled. And maybe drooled. But I moved on. Like the girls, I have to learn to suck it up and get with the group program. It can’t be all about me all the time. Right? So I was very happy that Café du Monde was part of the planned itinerary (and when I say “planned” itinerary, I mean planned by the tour guide without any input or influence by me...). Café du Monde was the best coffee I had on the trip (sorry La Quinta Inn breakfast buffet...). And the beignets – drenched in powdered sugar – were the perfect accompaniment. – Ms. Roberta

...The famous beignets...are delicioso. They have too much powdered sugar...it makes you cough. – Amber



## New Orleans – the Haunted Tour



The Ghost Tour was especially my favorite part of New Orleans because I enjoy scary things. I already read Stephen King books and watch scary movies which are my favorite types...-Empress

There was a story about a confederate soldier who haunts a house. He did it over a death at Shiloh. – Kelsey

Scary. Creepy. But interesting. – Fatuma

It was fun because I love ghost stories. – Dana

The Ghost Tour kind of freaked me out. I wasn't really a big fan of it but I participated. The tour guide had a really good sense of humor. - Jeronicka



I thought it was going to be really scary, but it was really fun. – Deja'nae

Our ghost tour was awesome. Our guide rocked! He was so theatrical and eery! He told the stories with such...pizazz! - Kitt

The tour at night was really fun but not when I had to pee. - Habiba

I liked the story where 2 ladies met this one man at a hotel and they wanted to take a picture with him. When they did, after a few days they looked at the photos they took of him and he wasn't in the photos – only the 2 ladies were. That was a very interesting, real, and spooky story. It scared me

but I got over it. – Maryan

One story Mr. Roland told us was the one with a gentleman who had a mistress who lived somewhere and a wife who he also lived with. The man died one day, and some weeks later the lady invited the young mistress for tea and the young girl was very excited and she went. She [the lady] served the young mistress tea. [After a] couple of sips she got knocked out because the lady had put poison in it. She then locked her up in the attic with chains attached! She and the lady are still heard today. Her banging her shoes against the wood to get some help from anyone...She haunts the place today and if you listen carefully you can hear her banging her feet against the wood to get help. – Amina

The scariest thing I heard on the tour was one of the girls say, "Oh man, I have really bad gas ya'll!" – Ms. Roberta

I noticed that most of the people that died, died on a balcony and most of them were women. - Habiba

It was kind of creepy where the construction worker fell down but got saved by a ghost. - Amber



## New Orleans – Hard Rock Café

It was delicious. – Dana

We had a very cute waiter who we tipped very high not because of his cuteness but because he also deserved it. – Amina

I enjoy the music in the background and how it makes you feel relaxed and happy at the same time...FYI they have great fries, too. And great waitresses. – Tiara

I officially love the Hard Rock. I had never been to one before tonight. The memorabilia was so cool! Oh! I could have stayed in there for hours just looking at everything. I took a picture of Madonna's g-string for my brother because I know it will make him uncomfortable. - Kitt

At dinner, a parade went by. And it's true parades just come out of nowhere in the city of New Orleans. - Mychael



## Little Rock – Testament (the statue honoring the Little Rock



We went to the "Testament," the civil rights memorial sculpture of the Little Rock Nine the "nine African American students [who] courageously integrated Little Rock Central High School in 1957." - Dana

We took a group picture with a collection of statues depicting African Americans being integrated into the public school system. It was raining a little when we took the picture. The drops of water dripping down the faces of the statues made it look as though they were crying. I bet they did cry on the day immortalized by the statues. - Kitt

Dana got her arm stuck in [the statue]. She felt so embarrassed she has begun to cry. I tried to tell her we have all been stuck in something... - Kelsey

We did have one of those, "should we call the fire department?" moments. But Ms. CT grabbed a bottle of hand sanitizer and got Dana's arm out. – Ms. Roberta

The statue represented the African Americans not being able to go to white schools. – Deja'nae

I had never heard of the Little Rock 9 so I was glad I was able to get a chance to see that. - Maya

### Little Rock – President Clinton Library

We went to the Clinton Presidential Center to find out more about our nation's 42<sup>nd</sup> president. - Dana

I learned that President Clinton was born in a place called Hope. Three months after he was born his dad died. Then his mom left to go to New Orleans to be a nurse. – Kelsey

I looked at the President's daily schedule and I found out what he was doing the day I was born. He was in a meeting vetoing a marriage law. – Sarah

I've always wanted to visit the presidential libraries. Now I can check one off my list! Ms. Roberta said the library was designed to look like a bridge. It symbolized moving forward. - Kitt

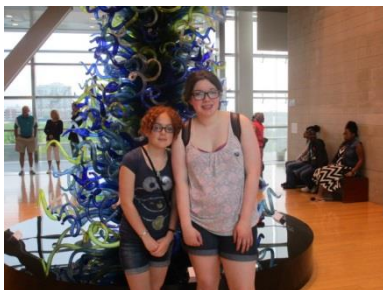
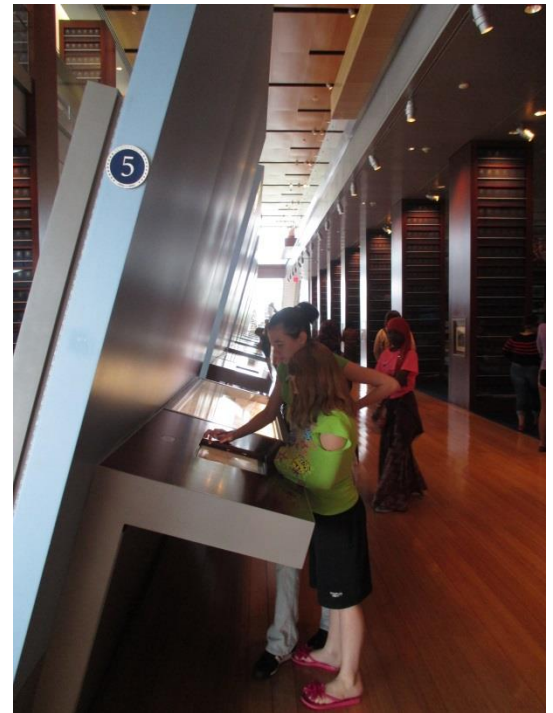


When I heard his name I was like "Clinton...hmm Clinton." Then I remembered about Chelsea and I think she's the one Girls Inc. had lunch with and my litter sister Famo got to meet. - Hinde

We got to see an exact replica of the Oval Office. Not many people get a chance to see this but then I got in trouble and everything went downhill. – Hailey

My favorite part of the Library was looking at the classical décor that was in the White House when Clinton was in office. It was very elegant, which was expected. But one thing that the tour guide expressed was 'that was Clinton's office during his term' meaning right now Obama doesn't have the exact same design as Clinton had. – Tori

I forgot to talk about the Chihuly glass in the Clinton Library! It was beautiful! I (along with my mother) love those glass masterpieces! We have a couple at the Joslyn in Omaha which is nice. – Kitt



I found the Clinton Library to be very interesting, more interesting than I thought it would have been. Yesterday, if you had asked me, "Where was President Clinton born?" I'd have had no clue whatsoever. The library was full of facts and historic events. I read through some of President Clinton's monthly/yearly schedule during his term. One thing I learned is that the last state/city President Clinton visited politically was Omaha, Nebraska. - Sakira



## Little Rock – Heifer International

We watched a video on what they do. Basically, their goal is to end poverty and hunger through the distribution of animals. I thought that was cool. They give cows, goats, sheep, alpacas, camels, ducks, rams, chickens, and other animals based on the needs. – Kelsey

One thing the [guide] said was the first man who was helping out by serving milk to the poor, he noticed that if he wasn't here tomorrow these people won't have anything more anymore. But if you give them a cow, they'll be able to live off of that cow because it could give them gallons of milk, plow their land, and reproduce to make more cows. - Amina

Heifer International has helped over 7 million families in over 125 countries improve their quality of life and become self-reliant. - Dana

If they give a cow to someone, they have to make a commitment that they have to pass an offspring to a neighbor or tribe member and them the same. This process is called "Passing on Gift." - Amina

I was very impressed by what they do and how they do it....They are now in 32 countries all over the world. – Amina

Heifer International is a building that donated animals that can help people around the world that are starving because...they really don't get enough protein to help their bones grow strong. – Habiba

I loved how we did a scavenger hunt. - Anab

A very caring company...I liked the seven M's: milk, money, motivation, muscle, meat, manure, and materials. I think those are basic things people need. – Fatuma

I want to thank whoever bought us the shirts. – Deja'nae

I enjoyed this because it shows how a little can go a long way...The Heifer Foundation helps people in need get back on their feet and I will definitely contribute to this action. - Tori

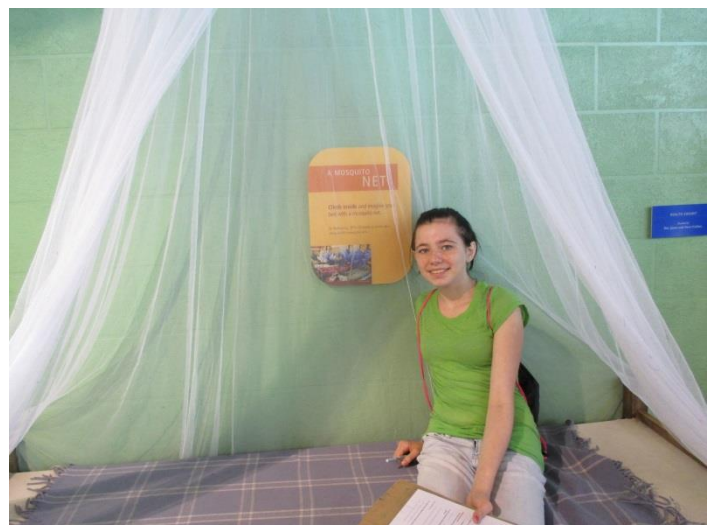
When I heard about hunger, poverty, lack of development, and poor education I always thought of them as separate problems. Heifer approached them as separate, but connected issues that can be solved with one gift. That's wonderful to me. - Samantha

I like the cow place because first of all we got shirts so thanks to whoever got [them] because it was really cute...- Hinde

I got a pin that said "Bee Sweet" and it's really cute. - Hailey

I learned that Brazilians speak Portuguese. - Amber

The people that got the animals looked really happy and



grateful. – Maryan

I learned that “heifer” means a female cow. - Tiara

Well today I learned what the word “heifer” means. I would hear people call girls or women that but I never actually sat back and wondered what it meant either. – Empress

I hope more people learn about the Heifer organization because walking in there I had no idea what it was. - Mychael



### Little Rock – Central High School & museum

We watched a video. After the video, we walked over to the high school. It is still in session so we got to see the students that attend. – Kelsey

We...watched a video about the 9 African American kids that went to the Central High School and had to fight to go the school. They were threatened, harassed, and spit upon and they still went there. – Hailey

I learned a lot about the Little Rock Nine in class. I think I’ve said it before but this trip has managed to bring class lessons to life. - Samantha

The school was HUGE....It was really sad how Elizabeth [Eckford], one of the Little Rock 9, walked by herself to school and the guards wouldn’t let her enter from the side door and made her walk to the front door. While she was walking the white people would spit on her and call her names. Also in school the white kids would hit them and wouldn’t get in trouble, but when the Little Rock 9 tried to fight back they would get suspended. One





of the Little Rock 9 was getting her lunch and the white kids were calling her names so she took her chili and spilled it on the kids...She got suspended for 10 days but the kids that got the chili spilled on them got sent home to change their clothes and came back to school. I think it was really unfair for the Little Rock 9... - Maryan

Many of the students graduated but only a few graduated from Central High School. The first one to graduate was Ernest Green. The ceremony was held on the football field. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. attended the graduation. – Kelsey

When Elizabeth was walking down the [street] people were spitting on her so badly that the back of her dress was so wet it's like they dumped a bucket of water on her. – Asnina

I read a book last year about Daisy Bates. It was interesting to actually see the school and the street corners from the book in real life. Like the girls say, it really does bring history to life. – Ms. Roberta

Their stories (about trying to come to school) make me really sad. I hate how they were treated! - Kitt

Eisenhower was president when they sent the troops in to help. – Amber

I learned that Elizabeth Eckford walked to school alone because she didn't have a phone to receive the message to not go to school because it was dangerous. – Sakira

The Little Rock 9 were very brave. I couldn't imagine what I would do...I thought it was really sad when Elizabeth went home and wrung out her dress and it was nothing but spit. It makes me wonder if Central High School in Omaha has a background like the school we visited. – Deja'nae

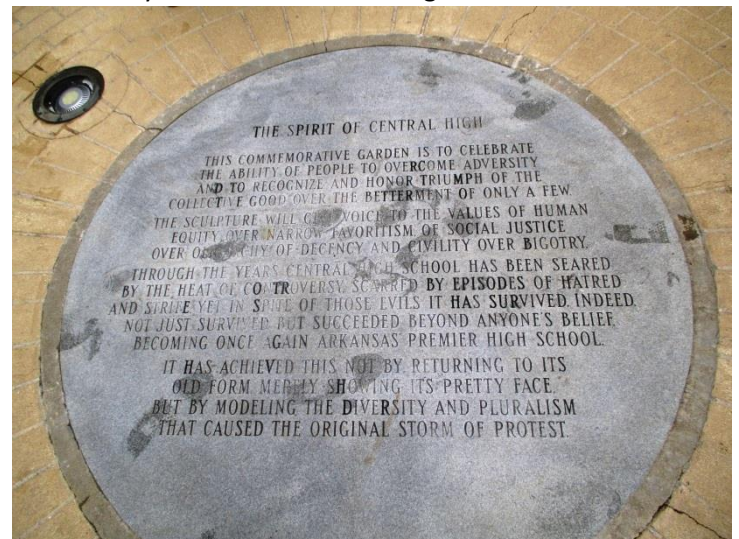
I always wanted to visit and I must admit it was worth the wait. First I learned that Central High School was built in 1927. I learned a lot about September 24, 1957 and what happened that day. Ernest Jones was the first African American to graduate from Central High School. - Mychael

I did 2 projects this past year on the Little Rock 9 so I was very familiar with most of the info. I can now brag [about] it to my teachers (Honors U.S. History teacher) that I actually got to visit maybe the most famous high school. - Amina

The school looks like our Central High back in Omaha...the auditorium looks similar to the one in the TAC building. – Amber

I learned lots of things today about how they would spit on Elizabeth and step on the back of her leg and all rude comments and stuff. – Hinde

Going to Central High School motivated me as a different black teen to fight for my fight. I just think it's amazing how the Little Rock 9 continued with their mission to step foot in Central High School. This makes me want to fight for my religion and my race so I'm glad I got to go to that school. - Hawa



The architecture of the school was beautiful. I'm jealous that my school doesn't look like that. That school was also gigantic! I would be scared to attend there today. I can't imagine how the 9 felt. That high school (grades 9-12) has a population of 2,500...My school (grades pre-k-12) has a population of 500. What the heck? Oh well. I like going to a tiny school! - Kitt

Through hard work things can change. It can change so much that what was once never heard of is natural...To make a difference someone has to stand up and begin the journey. – Kelsey

I do believe it would be an honor to go to school at Central High after the historic Little Rock 9. - Sakira

There was a time in 1957, at the height of the Little Rock crisis when Daisy Bates would not drive up 14<sup>th</sup> St. to Central High School without fearing for her life. Today that street is named in her honor. – Amber

I mentioned to our tour guide that the fields in Arkansas look like rice paddies. He told me they are rice paddies. OK, then. – Ms. Roberta

### **Branson – Shanghai Circus, Chinese Acrobats**

We haven't gotten started yet but we don't get popcorn and I want popcorn with a good show. - Hailey

The one I liked best was when they spun the metal circles. They made themselves look like slinkies. – Kelsey

They have some pretty outfits...I am very scared they will fall. They have to be very stable and perfect. - Amber

The good thing was you never knew what was coming next. - Sakira



Kitt and I got posters that we got signed. They were so awesome...Ms. Tess let Kitt use her pen and it was lost in the line of signers. I found mine but Kitt's is forever lost in the fray. – Kelsey

Seeing them up there makes me want to get up there and spin with skates on and cute outfits. I can envision me right now when they do roll call "Empress Cozart" and I bow and say, "thank you, thank you, thank you." I noticed thought that when it came to shaking hands the girls were a little weak but those 11 & 12 year old brothers were the most muscular I have ever seen at that age... Empress



I can't lie; the Acrobats of China had me nervous for about 90% of their show. It was so dangerous and the whole time I was thinking oh my god, this could go wrong at any given time. But it didn't and it was an amazing show and done beautifully. I enjoyed every minute of the madness. – Mychael

I loved all the performances, especially the couple act. It was very elegant and flowy and romantic. I realize it not only takes lots of practice but perseverance. It also takes lots of concentration during the actual performance. I would be very nervous not only





about messing up but about the crowd constantly clapping and applauding. Another thing I noticed was the fact that most of the acrobats came from China. So while Eboné was congratulating them, all they did was smile because they did not understand. The performance was definitely the highlight of the day. - Tori

Wow! Fantastic. So amazing. I am so happy I got to come here because I have seen billboards about this so I was looking forward to the opportunity. My favorite was the eleven and twelve-year-old boys...The other was the love story. It was so elegant. – Fatuma

It was awesome. Heart-wrenchingly awesome. – Sabrina

I wish I could do something like that and be flexible...I wonder how long it took all of them to learn all of this and if they were flexible when born or they had to learn to do splits and all of those other things. They're so cool. - Hinde

That was the best thing I've ever seen. It was awesome. – Hailey

The acrobats were amazing. I'm like, the boys are more flexible than me! - Eboné

They were all beautiful and handsome. My favorite part was the girls skating, the 2 lovers, and the guy that was balancing bowls on his head. And basically let's just say I loved all of them. - Maryan

I loved it...It was amazing. – Dana

It was amazing! Their movements were so fluid and beautiful! They also seemed to trust each other immensely. I want to watch it again and again and again. - Kitt

I loved the show. My favorite two were the skating and the hoola hoops. - Asnina

The costumes and their dancing were awesome. - Maya

I saw many displays of extreme flexibility...I am amazed just thinking how many years of training and discipline it takes to make all of this happen. To make it all perfect. - Sarah

I would love to be as flexible as they are. - Kelsey

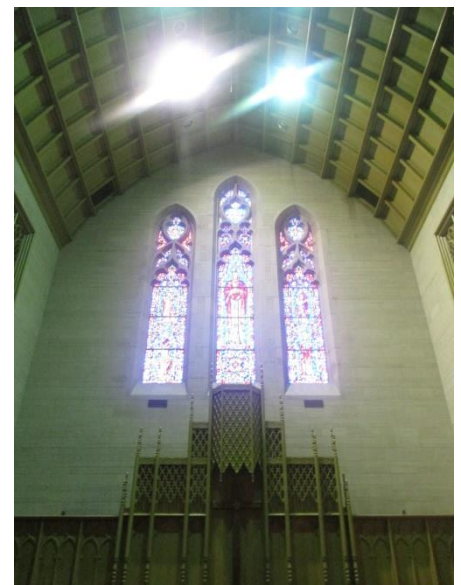
### **Branson – College of the Ozarks**

Everything looks so nice here. The lawns are well manicured and everything looks like it is in pristine condition. – Kelsey

The chapel here was built almost entirely by students, with supervisors. It is an example of neo-Gothic architecture. – Kelsey

They're like their own little village. I like the idea of how they are set up, but I don't think I would actually be able to go here. I don't like how small it is or the religious aspect. I've gone to Catholic schools my entire life up to this year. I don't think I could deal with this anymore. - Samantha

We got to taste their fruitcake. It tasted like peanut butter and grapes. – Amari



They sell 25,000 fruitcakes a year. They have one of the best greenhouses in the world. – Deja'nae

They have their own hospital on campus. – Amber

I like the fact that all the students work on campus, whether it is the fire department, hospital or agriculture...I also would consider going to this school because it is small. Right now the student body is about 1,500 (half the size of my high school) which means more one-on-one's with the teacher. Which helps me a lot. - Mychael

I now know where I want to go to college! I've had a really hard time trying to figure out where I want to go, but now I'm feeling decided. My mom will love how religiously-based the college is and tuition is free! I'm almost completely positive that I could get scholarships and working in your field isn't so bad. I'm giddy just thinking about going here. - Kitt



...Very impressive. Basically the whole school was run by students...They have their own dairy farm, cows, and market where they sell to their community and students. They... make a fruit cake that they are famous for that they also sell...They even have a club or a class that cleans up the grounds of the campus. - Amina

The College takes kids from 25 different countries and 48 different states. There are 1500 students that go to the college. Our tour guide was from Texas... - Maryan

You have to go to church 5 times a semester. – Deja'nae

More than 60% of the faculty hold doctoral degrees. - Amber

All students work on campus. Debt is discouraged and no federal, state, or private loans are made. - Amber

### Branson – Silver Dollar City

Food, amusement parks, shops, vibrant colors, restaurants, people, roller coasters, shopping and lots and lots of walking will probably sum up Silver Dollar City! It was so much fun. I have to admit thought my feet were begging me to stop using them. - Amina



Today I went on my first ever rollercoaster. It was called Wildfire. It went upside down and everywhere...I am so glad I put my fears behind me. I said to myself the whole time, "I will not let my fears control me anymore." So I let go of it, got on the ride, and I had so much fun. – Sarah



Today was an amazing day. I was in a group with Amari and we went on the roller coasters. It was really entertaining to see the picture after the ride. Amari's face was so funny because she was screaming the whole time. We also went on the Barn Swing which was OK. It went pretty high and we went on the American Plunge. It's a water slide thing. Out of all the rides I went on that one freaked me out the most because it had a dark tunnel and people kept making some really weird scary noises in the tunnel... I had a bomb funnel cake. It was like a dream after the first bite... - Tiara



The crew and I had fun because we went on the water slide. That was really fun because we got wet. Miss, I wonder what ride did you get on? The girls wanted me to get on the roller coaster that was called Thunderation. Oh NO Mama. I wouldn't go on even if it was for 100 dollars. Girl bye! – Habiba

I don't enjoy roller coasters. They aren't scary at all. They're just really uncomfortable. My neck still hurts. It was fun though. – Samantha

The rides were awesome. The Powder Keg was the best ride to me. It was a surprising rush. It takes you super fast to the top of the ride. The Outlaw was the tallest and fastest ride the park had to offer. It took you up 100 feet with a 162 foot drop gaining up to a speed of 82 mph at an 80°. Maya looked very shaken up and scared. - Sakira

The scariest ride I went on was called The Wildfire. It had a really big drop. - Tori

I only rode one ride, The Outlaw Run, and that was enough for me. I have been on a lot of roller coasters in my 16 years but this one by far was the scariest. I had fun although I thought I had died after the 163 foot drop. When our car pulled back into the station all of us (Empress, Sabrina, & Samantha) were laughing. I am happy I experienced that with them. - Mychael

I went on lots of roller coasters and I was really terrified. Some of them I didn't even want to go on and I can't believe I did. Maya forced me to go on some of them and I am glad she did because that was the best "forcement" ever...scary though. – Hinde

That was the best time of my life. – Maryan

We went on Outlaw Run. OMG. I was screaming the whole time. I went down and my head got stuck in that position for 5 seconds. We went upside down 2 times. Tori didn't get on it ...she's scared she was going to throw up. - Eboné

I went on some rides and that was my first time ever I have been on rides like that. I was really scared at first but you know, you've just got to believe in yourself...The scariest ride was the Giant Barn Swing. - Asnina





I was not fond of the idea of staying with staff but I had fun overall. Thanks! – Nicole

They had fried Oreos on a stick. We didn't go there. Just sayin'. – Ms. Roberta

Today I faced my biggest fear (riding a roller coaster). It was very long, bumpy, and full of curves. When I stepped on I knew I was going to regret the moment. First it was slow and steady then all of a sudden I felt adrenaline rush in then I blacked out. When I finally opened my eyes I realized I am facing one of my biggest fears (heights). Finally the ride came to an end. - Hawa

I went on my first roller coaster ride. – Sabrina

It was super fun. - Amari

I was so scared to get on the ride but I was acting tough...I wanted to try something new with Maya, Deja'nae, Tori, and my sisters. - Anab

I went with my sister, Dana, Nicole, and Sarah. We had so much fun. We went on the Wildfire, American Plunge twice, the giant Barn Swing, Flooded Mine, and the Thunderation twice. We got so soaked on the American Plunge but we dried pretty quickly. – Kelsey



I liked the boat ride but I got wet and I wasn't planning on it. – Fatuma

In the Flooded Mine we had to shoot at targets to get points. I had the lowest points and Nicole had the highest...I tried to hit the targets but they didn't like me. I just wasn't that good at it. – Kelsey



Thunderation...that ride was so scary I thought I was going to die...I screamed the whole ride... - Maryan

One lady said it was a child-like roller coaster but it didn't turn out to be. At the beginning of the ride I believed her but then all of a sudden the roller coaster went down real fast and it also got darker than before. [Maryan and I] were screaming. I've got to admit, I called for my mom's name... Funny thing is that Maryan and I just laughed it out at the end of each ride. We would laugh at how scared the other was and what gibberish we were saying during our trial of



terror. Kitt didn't go with us the first time but she said it wasn't scary at all at the Thunderation. I totally admire and have gained respect for Kitt for going on the Thunderation by herself! This might be an exaggeration but you have to be in my shoes to understand! I can never go on a ride without someone. Maryan was joking that if she ever went on that ride by herself she would be found fainted in the seat at the end of the ride. Even though we were both scared it's good to at least have someone next to you to hold on to and hurt their eardrums. This was my first time in Silver Dollar City and boy will I remember it! - Amina

The roller coaster started going really slowly, then all of a sudden it started going really fast. That was the best moment of my life. – Maryan

I remember reading about Silver Dollar City and the outlaws at the museum under the Lorraine Motel and how they robbed stage coaches and stuff...When we went on the Outlaw Run ride at Silver Dollar City they had a stagecoach there and outlaws so I got to put 2 & 2 together which I felt was cool. – Empress

I enjoyed Silver Dollar City and I enjoyed the Roller Coasters but they weren't scary. I don't think much is scary besides clowns, sewers, and Santa. That's not all – thunderstorms, all thunderstorms. They are just terrifying to me and when I see clowns and stuff like that it's torture. - Tiara

We had the best fun ever. - Anab

### **Branson – The Pool & Splashatorium**

Kitt and I went to the game room. I played air hockey with her and beat her. Then I played Kitt and she beat me. – Kelsey

I played table hockey with Kelsey for a while. I can't remember, but I believe we tied. It was a lot of fun. After table hockey, Kelsey and I changed into our bathing suits. Then we swam for a couple of hours. Now we're eating dinner and watching **Mulan**. – Kitt

My favorite part of today was the slide. – Deja'nae



## The Hotels

I am rooming with Empress, Mychael, and Kitt. They are pretty good people so I should have an OK time. – Kelsey

I hope we'll have time for swimming tonight. I love swimming and I hear the pool at the Heartbreak Hotel is the shape of a heart. ☺ - Kelsey

Yesterday we went swimming in a heart-shaped pool because we were at the Heartbreak Hotel. And in the heart, it is broken. – Dana

We had a good time last night in the hotel. Maya and I thought some of the pictures we took were funny. – Deja'nae

I really want to go swimming tonight but since the lockdown only older kids [are allowed to swim] and that's not fair to the girls who did nothing! - Asnina

I am really loving my window view. – Maya

When we got to the hotel our room was dirty and the aftermath was chaos. I'm happy it got worked out so fast. Shout out to the staff for being on top of things. - Mychael

I almost left my bathing suit at the hotel but Kitt was so nice she reminded me. – Kelsey

The hot tub was relaxing and chill. – Amari

With so many rooms, it is inevitable that we have a broken sink or clogged toilet at each hotel. Nothing we can't handle. – Ms. Roberta

Last night we had so much fun in the pool! – Deja'nae

...we stayed up late! – Nicole

The first morning I did room checks before we left and the rooms were spotless. This crew knows how to respect a hotel room and hotel maids. Very impressed! – Ms. Roberta



We are staying at a Drury Inn so we will have the free popcorn thing. Also, at this hotel the pool is on the roof! – Kelsey

I didn't want to get up today. I didn't hear the phone ring the first time because it didn't register. Anyway, we got up 5 minutes late but I made it to breakfast. – Kelsey

There was one lone chicken wing bone on the floor outside my hotel room door this morning. Forensic evidence of some midnight snacking on Ms. Donna's chicken. Other than that one bone, everything looked pretty good. – Ms. Roberta

What the heck? Our beds are unmade, we have no towels, and there's a ton of hair in the bathroom. I don't understand. It's gross. The beds are weird and super small, too. Sorry. There's a lot of complaining in this entry but can you



blame me? Woohoo, La Quinta! Due to the fact that our previous room was...disappointing we got a new room. It's clean with towels...So last night. In our first room we laughed about the size of our beds. We laughed about it in our second room, too. What I failed to realize was that the petite size of our beds was no laughing matter. Kelsey is kind of a restless sleeper...I mean she is a very restless sleeper. Around 2:30 (am) I woke up because it was really hot and I didn't know why. As it turned out, Kelsey's head was resting on my ribs and she was kicking my shin. I decided that the best way to move out from under Kelsey without waking her up was to stealthily slide off the bed. I was close enough to the edge of the bed that it shouldn't have been too difficult. So I slipped off the bed onto the floor and slept there for half an hour. At about 3:00 (am) Kelsey shifted so there was once again space on my side of the bed. Needless to say, it was kind of a rough night/morning. I am not complaining though. I actually thought it was kind of funny. - - Kitt

If it doesn't rain we can go swimming and I can't wait. If we don't go swimming I'll be devastated because I expected to go swimming this whole trip. - Hailey

I'm feelin' this hotel. - Empress

...The best part of the night was chilling in my sister's hotel room, 411, with us four girls. We had the grip of fun chilling, watching **Criminal Minds**, eating, joking, and just laughing non-stop. - Sabrina

When we went back to the hotel everybody went to their rooms and changed into swimming suits. I went down the water slide. It was fun. I swam. I also watched Maya and Deja'nae do a dance in the pool. It was awesome, incredible, and funny. - Asnina

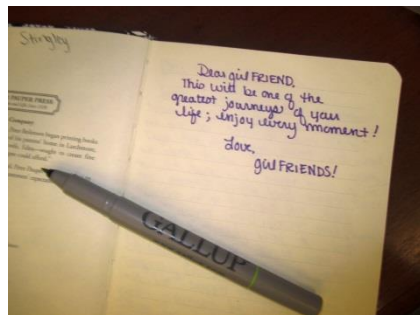
We...decided to go up to our room. That is where we stayed for the rest of the night. We watched **Pocahontas**, **The Little Mermaid**, and **Mulan**. At about 11:30 we went to bed. - Kelsey

## Journaling

I like writing in this journal. It helps me sort out my thoughts and put them out of my mind for a while. - Kelsey

I looked at my journal and it ripped in the back. I became a little sad because I liked it. I will still use it though because it isn't like the pages are falling out. - Kelsey

We received journals from the girlFRIENDS guild volunteers. They are an essential part of every trip. Many of the girls carry them throughout our tours and attractions to jot down notes or items of interest. At the end of the trip, each girl has a record of her experiences. Our volunteers inscribed each journal with a message to start us off. We appreciate this donation! - Ms. Roberta



## The Food



...Since it is raining we will have to eat lunch on the bus. It will probably be really good. It always is...I love how the first meal is prepared by Ms. Donna beforehand. It makes me feel like home and helps me feel a little less homesick. – Kelsey

The lunch was good. My favorite was the fruit. Thanks Ms. Donna & Ms. Philice. – Deja'nae

I overheard, "What is that smell? OMG...wait!...Is that?... Did Ms. Donna?...Is that Ms. Donna's chicken? BOMB!" – Ms. Roberta

The food for lunch is delicious – with chicken, bread, and a plum. – Amber



That chicken was good! - Khadija

I went down to breakfast and a lot of it was delicious. I especially liked the orange juice and bagel with cream cheese. – Kelsey

I love food and I like trying new food. – Kelsey

This was my first time trying crawfish. It was really good! – Deja'nae

I tried everything but I couldn't eat all the [crawfish etouffee] because I really don't eat fish. The crab I ate last night was the first seafood I'd had in two years. - Kitt

I had an amazing Shrimp Po' Boy, also known as a Poor Boy Sandwich because the poor boys used to buy a long load of French bread for a nickel. – Mychael

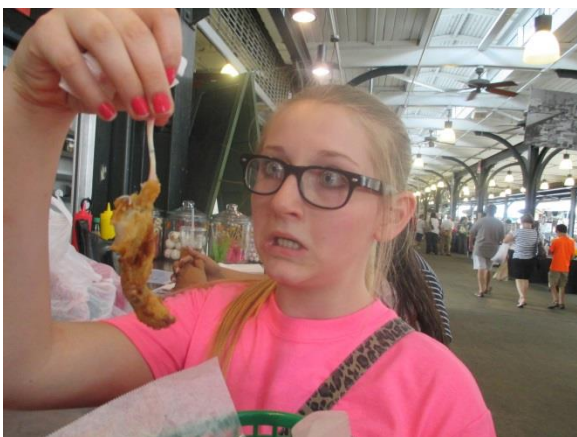
My favorite part of the day was trying the exquisite cuisine. I tried the Shrimp Po' Boy and it was very tasty. The difference between a po' boy and a regular sandwich would have to be the bread and seasonings. The po' boys have very thick and crusted bread. The seasonings are very spicy. Ms. Tess was the brave soul and tried alligator sausage. She told me if you want to try it, try it here and now because they probably won't make it better in Omaha. She said her sandwich tasted really good. I talked to a cashier of one of the food places and she said she has eaten many things including eels, snakes, and swordfish. She told me eel tastes similar to fish –like the flaky pattern. - Tori



I liked trying new foods which is my first time actually trying new foods because I am that type of person. – Maya

I loved the food. I would've never tasted it if it hadn't been for the staff. It was delicious...I thank the great cooks for lunch. – Amari

I wasn't sure about Gator burgers- but I decided that if I'm ever going to eat one, Louisiana is probably the place to do it! – Ms. Tess





You know what the guide said, “What we can catch; we can eat!” – Asnina

Lunch was ahhh-mazing. I enjoyed every bite and I appreciate that on this trip we are eating a lot more home cooked meals rather than fast food. - Mychael

...the food was really good! The crawfish were very good and I loved the Cajun seasoning. - Tori

I was happy when Ms. CT and Ms. Roberta let me try frog legs and alligator. Trying new things is really cool. I thought it would be nasty but it was really good. - Anab

I am so grateful to the staff because they let us have pop for once. – Amber

I tried jambalaya, crab & shrimp bisque, crawfish etouffee, fried green tomatoes, gator bites, frog legs, crab cakes, pralines...All insanely good, I assure you. (Except for maybe the frog legs. Looking at them is a little much. It's like eating the lower half of Kermit the Frog.) The girls gave the gator bites two thumbs up. – Ms. Roberta

We had a ton of fresh fruit on this trip- that was fantastic. – Ms. Tess

We had salad; some “smothered” rice with crawfish, corn, and some bread...The rice dish was delicious. Everything was but especially the rice dish. - Kelsey



## The Girls

I got to meet one of the Somali Bantu girls. Her name is Fatuma and she is a 7<sup>th</sup> grader...At first she didn't say anything but towards the end she sort of opened up. The girls from South are from Kenya and Somalia but they like to be called Somali Bantu. I learned that Somalis drag their A's out [when they speak]. I think this is a better day because maybe people will get along better with the South girls. They seem actually kind of cool...In the beginning, I was irritated with a lot of people but now so much anymore. Yesterday I met Fatuma and found out they weren't as rude as I thought. I probably didn't help them feel welcome but now I think that will change. Now I know a little bit more about their culture. One thing I never knew about them is why they wear the scarves on their heads. It is to show respect for themselves. I think that is very interesting and a good reason. – Kelsey



Just about everybody on this trip had a few encounters with drama but that's solved. – Hailey

Today I got to talk to some of the North girls. They are really cool. – Anab

Mixing up the North and South girls was a pretty good idea but I kind of want it to go back to regular. – Hinde

Habiba and I took some pictures together...She is nice and I think I did the right thing giving them a chance. They are funny and I like talking to them. She calls me a leprechaun but I am OK with that because all my friends at school call me that. I have gotten used to it



and enjoy playing along. – Kelsey

I really enjoyed talking to Mychael. Mychael and I had the best time ever. We actually learned things about each other. We complimented each other. Thanks to the teachers for combining North and South. North is not really that bad at all. – Asnina

I talked with Kitt for a little bit. She seems a bit shy, but if you take to her she will talk right back. She is really nice and I am glad she is in my room and that she was able to come on this trip...If Kitt wasn't on this trip, it wouldn't be half as fun...She also has a great sense of humor. – Kelsey



Thanks to Ms. Tess for hosting 9 girls for pizza, movies, and an overnight on Friday night before the trip to help make sure they would be there bright and early Saturday. Because a 9-day trip just isn't long enough. Am I right? – Ms. Roberta

Not my day. I am really irritated with everyone. – Maya







Maya is like the best to play and hand out with. Today Maya just made me laugh and enjoy my time. North girls are really cool. - Anab

Everybody is so dramatic. They get mad when you talk too much or laugh too loud. They get all in their feelings when a staff tells them something. - Kelsey

When I went to sit down with \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_, there was a boat load of drama. \_\_\_\_ was fighting, with her words, with \_\_\_\_\_. I honestly don't know what it was about but I am getting sick of it. \_\_\_\_ is always fighting with someone or complaining about everything. I asked her to stop it... but she said "I ain't her mom" and then she said no one liked me and walked away. - Kelsey

My roommates were nice. The only one I had a

problem with was \_\_\_\_\_. Every morning we had to argue with her to get up. Some morning she would just walk out [without brushing her teeth]. - Eboné

Today I learned about Sabrina. She is very pretty and awesome. Her favorite color is blue, just like mine. She has 7 siblings and she is 17 years old. She goes to Central...She likes people and chocolate. Her eye color is brown. For shoes, she likes slippers. She even has a sister that looks like her (twins). She fractured her skull 6 times. She is going to graduate next year and she is really nice. - Anab

Ms. Bev was my roommate. I hadn't really met her prior to the trip but we got along just fine! Ms. CT can keep Ms. Roberta as her roommate- I like Ms. Bev! - Ms. Tess

At dinner I learned 3 things about a couple of people:

- Nicole loves Justin Bieber. Weird. Going to 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Eboné goes to King Science. Favorite color purple. Likes basketball.
- Samantha favorite color blue. Goes to Central. Like to watch Netflix.
- Amina favorite color blue & green. Goes to Burke. Likes to draw & read.
- Fatuma doesn't have a favorite color. Goes to Gilder. Doesn't like Chinese food.
- Jeronica likes sugar & spaghetti. Likes all colors. Likes chips & cream cheese.
- Empress likes to do nails. Dresses pretty. Goes to Burke.
- Kitt favorite color blue. Likes sports. Goes to Louisville.

I really enjoyed sitting with other people today and learning different things. - Deja'nae

I thought that I've been with the same people this whole trip, so I mixed it up today. Habiba and I had icees and they were really sour! Maya and I stayed at the pool with Dana and Hailey. We all made up a cheer. We actually had fun. We talked to new people. - Deja'nae

So far I'm really getting along with my roommates. - Asnina





Amber

We reached our hotel and my roommates and I sat in silence feeling awkward. Finally we started an interesting conversation about how fun this should be. – Hawa

I really enjoyed meeting Sabrina. She's really funny and has done some different things that a lot of people have not done. It's not bad to switch things up sometimes, you might actually like it. - Sakira

I got to know Kelsey a little better. As it turns out, she has leprechaun powers...which is pretty neat. - Kitt

I feel very irritated because when I went in \_\_\_\_\_'s room, at least I was heading there, and \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ were arguing about a missing key in the hallway and I tried to tell them to stop being loud. \_\_\_\_\_ said, "Oh don't tell me what to do. You're a little annoying...." \_\_\_\_\_ thinks she can boss \_\_\_\_\_ around...I really wanted to say something but everything I say she wants to get smart with me and \_\_\_\_\_ and she isn't even assigned to the room...I got so irritated with her. -

When we went to the Chinese restaurant I thought I wasn't going to enjoy sitting with the North Center but it was actually fun...Maya can be a pretty respectful girl. You just need to know her before you judge her. But sitting with the North was okay. – Habiba

I interviewed Tiara and I learned things about her that were really interesting and cool.

#### The Biography of Tara

Tiara is a 13-year-old girl who was in foster care but got out May 19, 2014. She was born on December 7, 2000 and she is now 13. She is going to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade to the school McMillan. Her favorite color is lime green. Tiara has 10 brothers and sisters all together and she got a piercing when she was a baby and has a really, really small heart tattoo at the bottom of her left leg. She has blue eyes and her hair used to be dirty blonde but she decided to dye it black but just for fun. I asked Tiara, "Who was your inspiration?" and she said, 'Paul Walker because he is just so intelligent and he just has that one effect where you know, he's just so, you know!' So I thought that was interesting facts about her. - Hinde



Some North girls and I met. They are really cool once you get to meet them. - Anab

Also, \_\_\_\_\_ thinks she is grown so she can do whatever she wants but she can't. Also she was slamming on the door so she said...it slammed by itself. But that was not true. She did it on purpose. – Amber



Before we left to go to breakfast with Jeronicka, I was helping her out like fixing our beds and getting her stuff away in her suitcases and making sure we didn't at all forget anything. Sine Jeronicka and [I] are actually talking a lot with each other I made a friend and she is Jeronicka. – Amber



I thank the teachers that tried to make the trip fun for the girls even if the girls had bad attitude but the teachers tried to work it out. Sometimes it worked and sometimes no because the girls wouldn't have enough respect. - Habiba



I really though the idea the staff came up with about

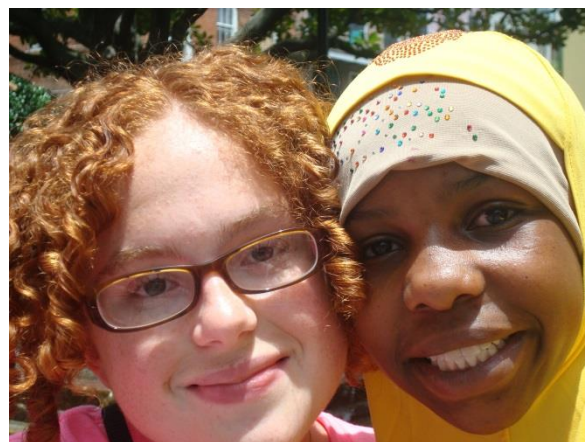
splitting us up into groups for dinner was a great thing because I am shy and I stay to myself. When you guys did that I felt very happy and I was willing to get to know others. So thanks for a great opportunity. Some things I learned about [the girls at] my table:

Hailey likes ketchup and eggs.

- Fatuma's favorite dish is sambusa.
- Dana likes to swim.
- Kelsey is 17.
- Nicole is silly and likes to make others smile and is also

obsessed with Justin Bieber.

- Empress likes to dance and has a great sense of humor.
- Deja'nae goes to Lewis & Clark Middle School and wants to be an obstetrician someday.



Interesting facts about Sarah –

- Is the oldest sibling
- Has 4 little sisters
- My opinion about her – kind, funny, generous, calm, pretty, has an amazing sense of humor and understands other people really well
- Sarah is 13
- We are the same age - Tiara

I like all my roommates and my sister Fatuma and two other girls – Eboné and Hailey. – Hinde

Jeronica told me her mentor was like a second mother. I ❤️ mentors. – Ms. Roberta

I enjoyed spending even more time with the North girls...During lunch I really enjoyed sitting next to the North girls. I always thought of them as aliens from North but now they are family from the same corporation known as Girls Inc. - Hawa

Tonight at dinner I met Asnina and one thing we have in common is we both prefer vanilla ice cream over any other. She told me that wearing the scarves on their heads is for tradition and they start wearing them from when they are five...She is a very sweet girl and I am happy I sat with her. - Mychael

Facts about Tiara –

- She has 10 brothers and sisters.
- She has a real tattoo.



- Her family has a tattoo business.
- Her favorite color is lime green.
- She wants to be in Law & Order (job). – Sarah

Sitting with the other girls was awesome. Me and the girls with the red hair named Kelsey , we actually get along and we sat with each other two times. - Habiba

I was wrong for calling \_\_\_\_\_ Sudanese and I was clearly aware that was not what she was. I apologize because we had a simple misunderstanding that just escalated because we're both girls – we have snappy attitudes. – Empress

I met a girl named Anab. She was nice. – Nicole

Amina and Maryan are sisters.  
Maya likes learning about serial killers.  
Eboné likes athletics.  
Kitt likes British shows.  
Sabrina is annoying. 😊  
- Samantha

When I first saw who I was all with in my hotel room I was a little nervous and shy and I didn't know if they were going to like me but they turned out to be really nice. They didn't leave me out either. They asked me if I wanted to sit by them and everything else. I have made a lot of new friends on the trip already.  
- Tiara

I was really happy I met new North girls. They were really cool and amazing. They made me happy. I met most of them. We had so much fun. - Anab

Now since we are at the hotel, it is kind of rough. Kids are being kind of rude to the teachers and to each other but my roommates are all kind to each other so it's pretty fun and cool. And even if we are in lockdown it's still cool, even though all we are doing is watching TV and looking outside through the window. I can't wait for tomorrow. - Hinde

### Travel Tips



Always double and even triple check to make sure you have everything. On this trip I have heard from many people who say they have left something in the hotel. – Kelsey

Don't be afraid. Just get out there and do it. – Fatuma

Try new food. – Anab

Always remember to pack more than one pair of pants. - Sakira





Keep toiletries separate from clothing or makeup...Sometimes a shower gel might burst and it could get on all of your stuff. Also, if you do this taking a shower could be easier because you can just take the whole toiletry bag in the bathroom with you and not have to worry about leaving stuff behind. - Tori

Don't eat too much sweets. It makes you hyper than you can't stop bouncing off the walls and so, yeah. – Hailey



Make sure you have everything with you when you leave a hotel. Spend your money wisely. Make sure your stuff is organized. – Deja'nae

A traveling tip for the girls: put a towel on the ground when you shower, keep the inside shower curtain inside the shower, don't throw away the plastic cups after you use them once, it is OKAY to drink regular water from the tap in the hotel rooms. – Ms. Tess

Amina's:

- Bring a pillow or blanket next time you are on a trip or

else you end up with an aching neck. – Amina

- Don't judge something or someone right away. Not everyone is who you think they are. – Amina
- Bring tennis shoes! You will regret it if you don't. – Amina
- Don't share a bed with 3 or more people.
- You will miss home more than anything. It's not easy!

Always be prepared and always come with someone. Never travel alone in the hotel. – Amber

If the hotel doesn't put in the effort to keep their rooms and lobby at least decent, don't trust their food. - Samantha

[Always use the restroom first at any stop.] "P" is for "pee" and "priority." – Hailey

Bring a camera. You might want to cherish these moments and memories. - Sakira

Get plenty of sleep in your hotel room because the bus seats aren't really that comfortable. - Jeronicka

Don't travel alone. Not only is it more fun to travel with other people, it's probably way safer. Make sure you go with someone who won't annoy you too much if you're alone with them in a confined space (car, plane, etc...). – Kitt

Remember to share a bed with someone who doesn't sleep wild and tries to take up all the space. – Sakira



## The Staff



Since I know a staff is reading this I would like to thank you for everything you have done thus far. Thank you for being here with us and dealing with all of our drama. Lastly, thank you for making us mingle with people we don't normally talk to. – Kelsey

The teachers were cool but sometimes got me mad but that was okay. - Anab

Thank you for all you have had to do and go through with us on this trip. You are awesome people who could be mistaken as mean, but in actuality want nothing but the best for us. - Kelsey

## Miscellaneous Thoughts & Learning

I just thought about the fact that I don't really know a whole lot about the history of Omaha. I think there is more than I know about. Maybe when I get back, I will research it and ask my mom about it. – Kelsey

We went places that I would never have had a chance to go to. – Anab

I've learned that traveling is never smooth, no matter how hard you work to smooth out the bumps. I guess I have to realize that not everything is up to me and this is an example. Sometimes no matter how hard you work to make things perfect, it doesn't go correctly. And it's not necessarily failure. I guess sometimes things don't rely on your wants and needs. Even though it sucks, a lot of times no matter what you do, you aren't enough. Or, if you are, there are people who don't want to see you succeed. Success is a game of chance. In order to get there you have to be resilient, confident, hardworking, and extremely motivated. You also have to pray that the people who are out to get you aren't in a position high enough to impact you much. I don't know. Maybe I just overthink things. For some reason I feel the need to turn things into a giant, unnecessary metaphor. - Samantha

To leave every attraction – and sometimes just one part of an attraction – it never fails that you will have to take the girls through a gift shop. 28 girls through a GIFT SHOP. 5 to 10 times per day. Think about it. – Ms. Roberta

I have one more thing to say to the teachers – I'm really sorry for room 416. The only reason we didn't clean a lot is because we were running to get downstairs. – Asnina

I enjoyed playing mashe & the hand games on our break. – Deja'nae

I like traveling and I think this might be the summer when I really find out or start to find out who I am. I think that's what's so difficult about being a teenager. You leave the childhood dream of a perfect world behind but you aren't quite capable of doing anything to fix it. You see all the terrible stuff around you and sometimes it's hard to see any positive left. And you find the person looking back at you in the mirror is a stranger and it's terrifying. - Samantha

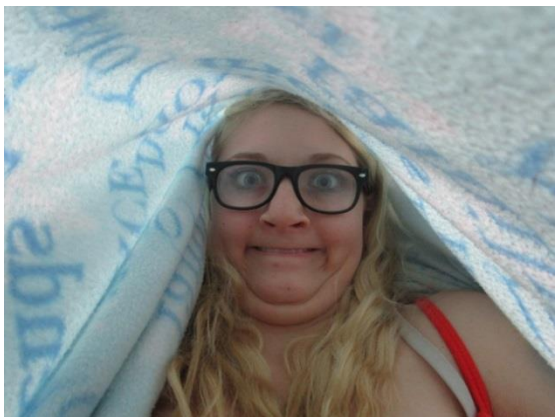
Best last high school summer I could imagine! – Sabrina

My sister asked the bus driver if he missed his family and his wife and he said "yes." She related it to her missing her phone. I think the bus driver's wife is pretty. - Hinde

I am so close to graduating, I can see my life. I can see me going to college and being an adult. On my road to adulthood. I know Girls Inc. will be a part of it. – Kelsey







This trip has benefited me in many ways – how to make friends, how to follow instructions, respect, accepting no. – Nicole

I am also scared because I watch too much television and I learned that New Orleans is one of the most haunted cities in the world because they cannot bury their people here because the water level is too high. So I learned you are more likely to see a ghost walking on the street here than anywhere else because the bodies aren't buried underground. So, yes I'm scared. But I am also a done devil so I guess tomorrow we will find out for ourselves. – Sakira

Ms. CT referred to me as "The Boss with the Hot Sauce." I don't know whether to be flattered or go tell Ms. Bev and start some drama. – Ms. Roberta

I got mad many times especially about my phone but I also made others mad too, like the staff. – Khadija

They did a survey on kids and most black kids chose a white baby doll. – Deja'nae

I am happy to be on this trip because when we were at [the French Market] people came up to us and took pictures because I think they have never seen people like us so I was happy about that. – Anab



When I passed the Girls Inc. cameras out to a few of the girls, I got a memory stick at the end of the day heavy on the "selfies" and lean on the historical sites. Hmmm.... – Ms. Roberta

Social issues can be changed but we have to work and work wisely to change how people think. Isn't that what the civil rights movement was? - Samantha

I am glad I came on this trip so far because I have been having a great time and my little sister is having a great time, too. I'm glad she is enjoying it and I get to see other girls having a good time and there is no arguing which is good for everyone...Just to know we are all getting along and making new friends. – Tiara

A couple of things I learned from this trip –

- History can change. We all learned in school the traditional history of the U.S., but as technology gets better new things are discovered that weren't noticed before and that can lead to updated history. For example, I learned that in the Martin Luther King, Jr. assassination, they were sure who killed him. But when I went to the museum, they were never 100% sure. Scientific and mathematical features of the killing varied and therefore they were unsure. This is where all the conspiracies come in.
- Another thing I learned is that before you can build a building, first you need to find out about the land and the geographical features, and design the building to coordinate with it. For example, in New Orleans, they had a hard time building things because if they dug more than 14 inches in the ground they would find nothing but water. Another example was when we traveled to the small town in Louisiana, the houses were built on big poles because it flooded a lot and they needed to find a way to adapt.
- Lastly, I found a way to relax. Just being a freshman in high school this year was very challenging and it was a great way to start summer break. - Tori

On this trip fun was infused in the history of the places we went. It was a vacation that we got to learn stuff that will last a lifetime. It wasn't a perfect trip without problems, but everything was still awesome. I met new people, including Kitt who is pretty awesome. When my friends from Girls Inc. were being dramatic I could talk to someone else. Kitt was my



We have 28 girls. Mental math told me this wasn't going to happen. #LookMaNoCalculator When we got on the bus to head to a place across the street, Ms. CT used the moment to do a little business/entrepreneurship lesson. We were not impressed. – Ms. Roberta

This trip had too many bad days like lockdown arguments about phones. Good thing I wasn't in it. – Asnina

The lesson I learned for the past 8 days is diversity is better than the same. So what I mean by that is be with different people, not just people that are the same. - Hawa



for another geeky reference! It's like when Bilbo decided (at the last minute) to join the dwarves on their adventure. He was convinced by the wise wizard Gandalf (my brother – Jason). Whilst on the adventure there were moments when leaving home seemed like a mistake (St. Louis Arch), but there were also moments that made it all worthwhile (Ghost Tour). Now that it's over, like Bilbo, I can't wait to go on another adventure. I even had to conquer my dragon – Bilbo's was Smaug, mine was meeting new people. Bilbo also had to make new friends (the dwarves). So maybe making friends wasn't my dragon...I got it! My dragon was the St. Louis Arch. I did it, but I think I left my dignity up there when I cried and hyperventilated...Oh well, I actually didn't think my adventure would coincide with Bilbo's so much. That makes me really happy! Mr. Kevin the chef could be the big bear guy whose name escapes me! He's scary at first, but turns out to be really awesome... - Kitt

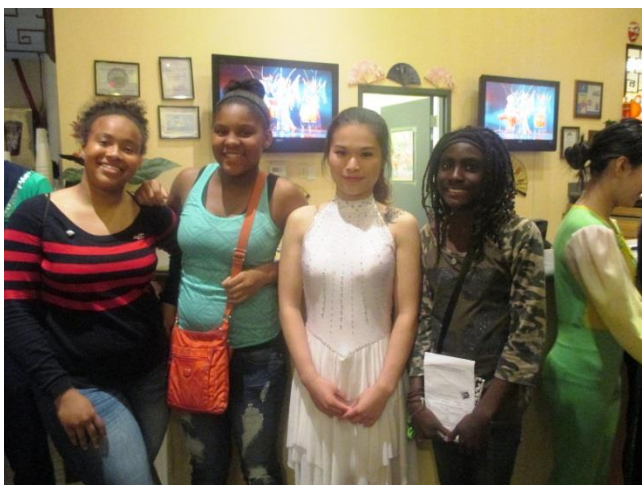
roommate and it was easy to talk to her. She has the same humor I have and she is quiet like I used to be...I am happy to know Kitt. – Kelsey

At one lunch establishment in Memphis, the girls were excited because we were going to order icee's (instead of the usual bottled or cups of water). First, the manager wouldn't let us sub small icee's for the drinks as part of the meals. Then when they started making the icee's the machine plopped out a few unimpressive blobs of blue icee. Not even ¼ of a small ice before the machine burped and quit. The employee told us they could only make 3 at a time and would need a 10 minute refresh between every 3 icees.

Over the course of this trip I learned that I can successfully go on a trip (that's longer than 48 hours) without my immediate family (or at the very least my brothers). I honestly didn't think I could do it. I also learned that my brothers play a way bigger role in my life than I give them credit for. I honestly didn't think I would miss them that much, but I actually missed them more than anyone...I learned (well I already knew this...I was reminded not to) judge a book by its cover. I came on this trip maybe knowing seven girls and that was scary. In my head (on the first day) all the girls were these tough, mean looking people that would totally beat me up. In the end I've talked to everyone (I think) and they're all really awesome. I've learned that an adventure, especially one you're not sure you want to go on, can be the best thing ever. It's time







The walk with Ms. CT was fun. I really enjoyed looking for shorts with the 5 of us. – Sabrina

On this trip I learned not to slam [hotel room] doors. I also learned how to manage my money. – Deja'nae

It is nice to think about growing up and being able to make a difference in someone's life through medical attention and by giving necessary supplies...I love working with babies and want to be in the medical field. With all of that in mind, I decided I want to be a neonatal intensive care nurse. I would get to help the premie babies and help them to live. People keep saying that they couldn't do it because sometimes the babies don't make it. The way I see it if I can help save one then all of the pain is worth it. – Kelsey

The tour guide told us how many Creole people like to be called Creole. I thought about the conversation we had with some of the Emma Lozier South Center girls yesterday. They were telling us that they like to be referred to as Kenyan or Somali Bantu rather than Somali. People do have preferences. When in doubt, ask. – Ms. Roberta

I am actually excited for this summer because I was strong, smart, and bold enough to write a letter to Ms. Emily because I wanted to start a Henna Club at Girls Inc. I stated many reasons why it will be beneficial to the Center and the girls. This will actually show people in the community that Girls Inc. girls do surely embody the slogan of Girls Inc. Ms. Emily did actually approve it...She said she'll meet with me in 2 weeks...The girls that can't do henna are going to be making fliers and a whole binder of henna designs! – Amina

I really miss my phone and I am sorry to all the staff if it feels like I have an attitude but I just love my phone so much and I don't want this to affect my mood, my trip, and the person I want to be. SORRY. ☹️ - Hawa

Some of the girls tipped the waiters and waitresses at almost every restaurant with their own money. Girls Inc. obviously always tipped our wait staff, but I appreciated watching the girls appreciate service and recognize that 28 girls at dinner can make a big mess that warrants a fair tip. 😊 - Ms. Tess

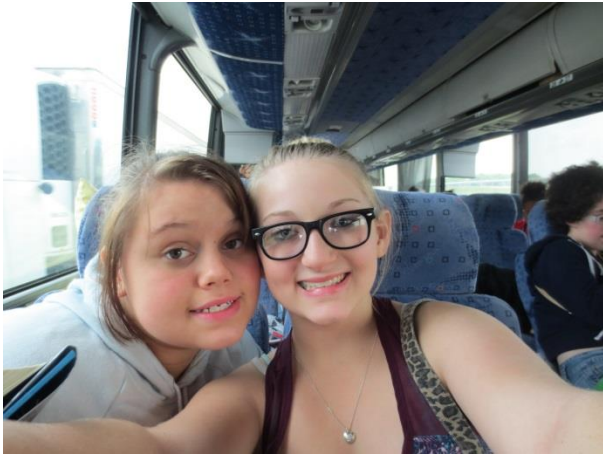
I have learned a lesson: never, never, never, never, never, never put your arm in a statue. So I am scared to go by a statue because I got my arm stuck. – Dana

Today is my second day far from home and now that I realized it I have already done so much stuff and I have had a smile on my face while doing it. I'm glad I did come because if I didn't I'd still be scared to go so far away from my family. But I'm enjoying it and I'll have tons of great memories to remember. - Tiara

This trip has made me a happier person and showed me how to have fun. – Amari

I learned that sometimes a college that isn't ridiculously expensive can still be really good. I was only looking at Ivy League colleges before we visited C of O. I am seriously considering attending school there or at the very least, applying. - Kitt





I learned new things are more fun when you are with other people. – Amber

On this whole trip I forgot everything I was every afraid of. I forgave people. I got to know others. I overcame my fear of heights and rollercoasters. I feel like a new person...On this trip I went out of my comfort zone and I am glad I did. – Sarah

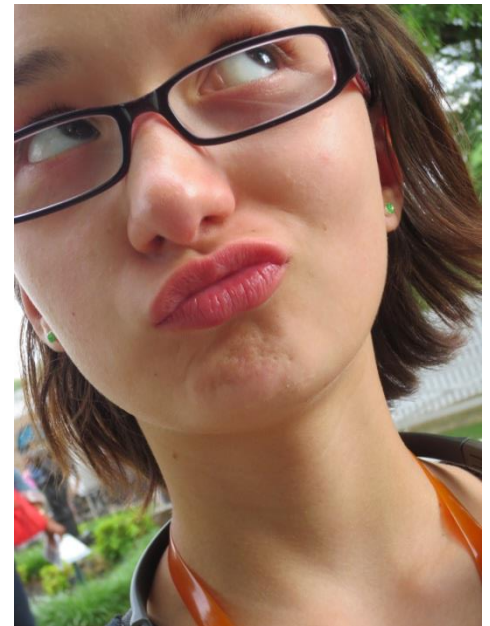
I like the fact that Ms. CT and Ms. Roberta took the time to appreciate the older girls and ask for our help. I will more than gladly help you guys without a problem. I want the younger girls to be able to look up to us in a positive way so thanks for giving us the opportunity. - Jeronicka

I learned a lot about keeping every moment that will benefit me. I learned that creole food is not a recipe. I learned that Ms. CT can make me laugh to the point of tears. I learned that I may fear heights, but my fear shouldn't hinder me. I was scared to go up the Arch, but I gained one of the best views of my life. I was scared to go on the roller coaster but Ai enjoyed myself and gained a great memory with my sister and friends. I feared going on this trip but I gained so much that I am a little more prepared for leaving Omaha and going to college. – Sabrina

I think that the relationship that grew the most was mine and Tiara's friendship. Before this trip Tiara and I didn't talk at all. Neither did I ever think she talked at all. Everyone thought she was quiet, but all you have to do is talk and really get to know each other. - Sakira

It was fun learning new things while having fun at the same time. – Tiara

At the hotel in New Orleans, we took the girls to a corner to be stern (they would say "mean") about some unsafe behaviors and to do some group reminders. I noticed a woman listening to us and she stepped closer to the group. I asked her, "Can I help you?" She asked, "Is it OK if I listen to you?" No! We dismissed the girls to the next activity. Weird. – Ms. Roberta



I learned a lot about the history of New Orleans...I also feel good about myself. I conquered some fears like boat riding and the St. Louis Arch. I pushed myself not to be so anti-social. – Jeronicka

...I did learn about myself. I learned how to deal with uncomfortable situations and learning how to be responsible on a larger scale. Even though my mother won't like it, I am moving out soon. Graduation isn't all that far away, but my college choices are. Being away from home for 9 days taught me how to socialize for long periods of time ever if I'm upset or tired. I also realize that in order to get things done you have to be assertive or sometimes respectfully aggressive. Former to this trip I was really passive aggressive/passive. I still am for the most part. It'll take time, but I am mainly glad I realized it.

This trip has helped me gain experiences that many people will never have. I went on a roller coaster for the first (and probably last) time and tried a variety of new foods. I visited and fell in love with a city I never thought I would like. I



always thought of New Orleans as dirty and ugly and now that I've been, I truly believe it is one of my favorite places. I also really enjoyed the bayou. I want to go to college there really bad. - Samantha

I loved this trip and had so much fun...I learned to always meet new people and never be scared to talk. Stand up for each other. When one person is falling, make them feel special for at least one day and put a smile on their face. – Anab

I learned a lot and not just about the places we went but the people around me. I had a lot of fun on the trip. Ate a lot of good food and bonded with my Girls Inc. sisters. Another year, another successful trip. - Mychael

## Gratitude

This trip wouldn't have been possible if it weren't for the donors and the sponsors. I would like to thank them. I would like to thank Friends of Foster Care for paying [part of] my way on this trip. Thank you Ms. CT, Ms. Bev, Ms. Roberta and Ms. Tess for taking your time to come on this trip to watch over us girls. You made sure we stayed safe and made sure we got to see all of the important stuff. Thanks for being awesome. I want to thank the bus driver, Mr. Gary, for driving us to the places. This trip was one of the best ones I have been on. It was filled with people I knew and one I began to know. This trip felt more like a trip than the others and I am glad I came. I am glad I had this wonderful opportunity. – Kelsey

I'd like to thank all of the staff and sponsors who made this all possible. – Sarah



I want to thank Ms. CT, Ms. Bev, Ms. Roberta, and Ms. Tess for making this trip possible. I want to thank Girls Inc. for giving me the opportunity to come on these trips. Because of these trips, I've been to 47 out of the 50 states. Most people my age or older have never even been out of Omaha, so I am truly grateful for that. I am grateful for the friendships I have gained and the ones that have gotten stronger during the trip. - Mychael

I am really excited to go home. I'm grateful to everyone here and behind the scenes that allowed me to go on the trip. I realize this trip took a lot of work. Raising all the money for the hotels, gas, the bus, food (dining in and out), emergencies, admissions to all the places, etc...Just the organization alone must have been a ton of work. So for all of that, thank you. - Samantha

I just want to thank everyone for being so nice to me. I also want to thank the teachers and family for helping me go and raise money. I want to thank Ms. Krystal my mentor for helping me go and getting me ready and just being there for me and being a good mentor. Thanks to Ms. Tess for letting me use her suitcase and sleep over and everything. Thanks to all the teachers on this bus cause even though I got my phone taken away, I still had fun so thanks. And also the bus driver, Mr. Gary. He is nice and safe and thanks for driving us safely and nicely and keeping me alive. Thanks North, South, everybody. - Hinde

I want to thank Girls Inc. for paying for me to go to this trip. I had a blast! – Deja'nae

I would like to thank my mom for making this trip possible for me. And the staff for keeping us safe and making stuff fun. – Eboné



Thanks for letting me have the opportunity to go on the trip and thanks to for Sabrina for helping me. Thanks to Amari, Sakira, Fatuma, Hawa, Habiba, and Deja'nae for making me laugh even if I didn't want to... - Khadija

I would like to give a shout out to the bus driver for driving us on this trip. – Dana

I am thankful for the staff for bringing us on this trip and to support us when most kids don't get these opportunities as a kid or as an adult. I appreciate that very much. Thanks for putting a smile on kids' faces from these memories. I am glad I did come on this trip. – Tiara

I am thankful for everyone who let me go on this trip. – Hawa

I am grateful to Hinde's mentor, Ms. Krystal for helping with transportation before and after the trip! She helped to make MY life easier. Thanks girl! – Ms. Tess

I thank the people that took their time to pay for me to go on this amazing trip. And I thank OHA ...and my mentor...my dad and my mom. – Habiba

I want to give Mr. Gary a shout out because he told me he took a vacation/break just to take us to this trip. I am very thankful for that. - Hawa

I am just so thankful for all of the teachers that are on this bus for letting me go on this long journey to New Orleans. – Hailey

Shout out to the family members who helped load (& unload) the bus. – Ms. Roberta

The trip was very wonderful. I enjoyed New Orleans and other places we went. I know it took lots of preparations to plan for this trip so I want to thank the staff that helped us meet the criteria to go on this trip and make things possible for enjoyment. - Tori



Thanks for all of this. – Amari

I want to thank the person that paid for me...This trip was really fun. I had the time of my life. I want to say thank you to my mentor for the spending money she gave me. Thanks for your hard work in helping me get ready for this trip. She helped me get a suitcase, get ready and talked with me about what traveling is like. The trip was fun, we had a wonderful time- thanks! - Asnina

Well I'd like to thank Ms. CT for letting me go on this trip because I didn't have money to go. Being on this trip has made tons of memories but being on this trip was a privilege and I didn't have to come but I showed I was responsible enough to go. I am glad I came because I learned so much that some kids don't get the choice to go on a trip to learn what we



did. Thanks to all the staff for coming on this trip to make sure everyone was safe. I thought it was very kind and generous of you guys to do that. - Tiara

I want to thank all the teachers who put us on this trip. Ms. Roberta, Ms. Tess, and all the other secret people that put us on this trip. I want to tell you guys I enjoyed this trip to the last moment. Teachers are teachers but not as special as you. - Fatuma

I want to thank the staff for taking all of us on the trip. I could tell it was stressful but I hope ya'll enjoyed your time as well. I want to thank Ms. CT for working so hard putting this trip together and for working with my mom to make it possible to get us on this trip. I want to thank the anonymous donor(s) for paying my sister and my ways. I want to thank Empress and Mychael for our fun conversations and chill moments. Finally, I want to thank the majority of the Kenyan-Somali girls for making me laugh and the rest of the girls for keeping the trip interesting. - Sabrina

Thank you all for making this trip the best. - Dana

I am really thankful towards a lot of people. My brother encouraged me to go. He believed I could go on a trip which really meant a lot...My roommates were really great! They were all really nice and fun to hang out with. The South girls really accepted me in their clique. They let me eat with them and hang out with them. It was really nice of them to include me. I appreciate that my parents let me come. They didn't have to. I honestly got out of a lot of work but coming on this trip - I missed all the moving. I know it was also really hard for my mom to say goodbye to me for so long. I never called home, either. So...yeah. - Kitt

Thanks for the [souvenir] shirts from heifer International. - Anab



Thanks Girls Inc. You make dreams come true. - Jeronica

I want to thank Ms. Bev and Ms. CT for being Über Chaperones. Somewhere between St. Louis and Memphis I calculated that the two of them have chaperoned 415 girls over the years and been on the bus for upwards of 20,500 miles. They each have special skill sets that complement each other. Together they are an amazing team. I want to thank Ms. Tess and Ms. Bev for taking vacation to volunteer for the trip. Of course, I want to thank all of our amazing donors who have supported our journey this year. - Ms. Roberta

Thanks to Ms. CT for giving me a chance to go on this trip. - Amber

There's no one quite like a special teacher and no teacher quite as special as you. Thank

you Ms. Tess, Ms. Roberta and the other specialists. Thank you. I love you guys for taking me on this trip and supporting me. - Fatuma

I would like to make shout outs to these awesome people in my life:

- Ms. Tess – making sure I/we [had] all the paperwork completed.
- My mentor Dede - buying us the suitcases and for letting us pick a black, gorgeous purse for my mom for Mother's Day... Thank you for everything! - for the encouragement, courage, love and support you have given me for the last 2 years! You're the best mentor a girl could hope for. I actually consider you more of a family than just a lady in my life.
- Allison for bringing us to the North [Center] for the bus and breakfast. I feel like I owe you Allison for sacrificing your sleep to get us to the North [Center] twice!
- My mom and Dad for letting us go on this long field trip. I have never been away from my mom or home before and I'm glad, Mom, that you can trust me to take care of myself and Maryan. I know it's hard for you since it's our first time being away from home and you!...Mom, I know it's hard for you to have us away from you. I know you were concerned and worried throughout the whole trip. - Amina



I wanted to thank my teachers and friends who came with me on this trip. This was the best thing that ever happened to me in my life. Thank you Alison for everything. Thank you for the spending money and helping me get organized for the trip. Thanks for the shopping trip and the traveling advice. Thank you for being the best mentor ever. – Maryan

Thank you to whoever paid for my sister and me. And of course a tremendous amount of gratitude is owed to Ms. CT, Ms. Robert, Ms. Tess, Ms. Bev, and Mr. Gary, the bus driver. They all dealt with us in close quarters for 9 days and somehow we're all coming back alive. So thank you all. - Samantha

Thanks for planning this trip for all the beautiful strong, smart, and bold girls...I would like to give a special thanks to whoever made it possible for me to attend this trip. I would also like to give a shout out to Ms. CT and Ms. Roberta for helping me, encouraging me, and being the best positive people they can be in my life. I look up to you guys. You both mean a lot to me. You guys give me hope. - Jeronicka

This trip. This experience. I thank everyone involved for making it possible.



If I were to fear  
Every sky and its clouds  
Every blade of grass  
Every drop of water  
In a river or lake,  
Pond or ocean  
Where would I be?

Where would my voice ring  
When I screamed,  
When I sing?



Where would I  
Dream?  
Live?  
Learn?  
Die?

If I feared  
The land of my people,  
Who would I be?  
Wouldn't that be the same as  
Fearing my people...  
Fearing me?

So as I travel my  
People's land,  
German, Native American, Black, Roma  
I learn of my  
People  
I learn of  
Myself  
I learn of  
My land

I travel  
I am free.  
- Sabrina

