



## TAKE STOCK IN CHILDREN EXPERIMENT FUND SAMPLE 2015 RECIPIENT ESSAYS

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### Happiness

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*Botswana: Wildlife, Ecology, and Culture*

Out of the entire summer visit in Botswana, the homestay was the most eye-opening and life changing experience. The people of Otse's main focus is connection and happiness. Here in America, happiness is derived from materialistic objects. My host family helped me realize how much my actual family does for me, and that I should be extremely thankful for all their efforts to make sure I'm happy and healthy.

Normal daily routines like showering, doing laundry, washing dishes, and using electricity also made me appreciate life in America. For example, in order to take a shower in the village, you have to either heat water up outside with the cooking fire or in a metal canister plugged into the electricity socket since there is no running hot water. Once water is heated, I then put it in a small plastic tub which was placed in the main bath tub. I washed myself off with a wash cloth and used the remnants of the water to wash my hair. Another example is when I wanted to wash my clothes, I would hand wash them in the bathroom sink with a bar of soap. Little duties like these made me realize how lucky and fortunate I am to have running clean hot water and washing machines to do these tasks.

Walking through the village to get to the community center every day involved me walking down some roads that had families living in shacks and underneath tarps. A majority of these residents said hello every morning and were very polite and friendly. They were also happy, and made the best of every day. I know now how fortunate I am to have the life I have in America. My outlook on life has changed. I will forever define happiness differently. Everything that I have is a blessing. Immersing myself in the Botswana way of life helped me understand how much the simple things in life matter. A roof over my head, something to sleep on, food to fill my stomach, and family that loves me is all I need for happiness.

Thank you for giving me a summer to always remember, and for allowing me to learn about the beautiful country of Botswana.