

I participated in the Soweto cultural immersion program with Eastern Mennonite University back in September. I want to thank you all for working so nicely with us during that time. We have arrived back in the US, and the rest of our trip to Lesotho and Cape Town went very well. We learned so much...so much that now, even after more than a week of being back in the US, I'm still trying to sort my mind out because of the intensity of the experience. But I want to tell you that the things I learned in the TALK sessions about language and culture learning, as well as the things I learned in Soweto really sustained me throughout the trip, as many tools I acquired as a result of my experience with you all and in Soweto seemed specifically geared toward that experience, but I later found them to be quite universal and I was able to use them later, not only in furthering my Sesotho cultural and language learning in Lesotho, but also to help me understand better other cultures of South Africa. We later found ourselves staying with rural Afrikaner families in Bethulie, Free State, and also I visited a friend at UKZN in Durban, so I found myself staying with some Basotho but surrounded by Zulus and better able to appreciate all those experiences because of the tools I acquired through your program. Furthermore, I was able to develop deeper relationships with the people in my group and I also, right now as I sit in my parents' living room, I find myself thinking about the things that I learned from your program in reference to relating to people in my own community at home. And, I better not forget the amazing people I met in Cape Town and in the townships and university in that area as well...the acceptance of the cultural and individual differences and similarities. In short, your program has allowed me to have some new effective tools that allow me to interact more respectfully with myself and with other human beings no matter where I am!

There was also an interesting bit of circumstance that brought my experience in South Africa and Lesotho around full circle...not only was Phaphama with me in reference to the tools I learned with you all, but also the guy I was staying with in Cape Town actually shares an office with Phaphama's Cape Town office. I thought it was a nice way of finding closure for this trip...and it happened naturally!

I hope that your work in the future continues to grow with the same positivity that you helped me achieve through your programs.

Sincerely,
Nicholas Carl