

# Helping hands: Connecting Across the Sea

Our family was headed to Jamaica for a summer vacation and I had a need to somehow connect with a preschool there. I haven't done anything like this before, but I wanted our 4 year old daughter, Olivia, and the children in our community at the Kentucky Flat Community Preschool to have an idea of what it feels like to offer supplies, love, and connection to others in other parts of the world. So I began asking around and found a basic school (ages 2-6) that offers services to low income families in Kingston.

It was Jamaica's Independence Day and the weather was hot. There were no cars available to rent and the only way we could get to Kingston was to hire a taxi service. We saw so much of the beautiful lush land of Jamaica and many of the celebration activities during our 4 hour round trip to and from Kingston from Ocho Rios. Before coming I had been in brief contact with Didi Gunamaya about our visit, but she was in the classroom with children like me so our phone conversations were short and sweet. Many of the details for travel were left unknown and yet somehow I knew that it would all work out and we would get the art supplies to those children. Once we arrived in Kingston our driver was very nervous and had to call someone many times to get directions. He ended up asking the police who gave us our own personal escort to the school! We finally arrived at 12 Criffe Rd. in Kingston 6 Jamaica.

Olivia rolled the suitcase of supplies through the open gate as we walked up to the front door where Dada greeted us with a glowing warm smile and welcoming arms. He expressed his extreme gratefulness for our journey and art supplies. Olivia rolled the art supplies in and handed them to Dada who responded, "Oh, I am so happy you are here!"

He offered us water and snacks as we sat at his desk in the office and visited for a moment. I spoke on the phone with Didi Gunamaya who was wanting to cook for us and wanted us to stay for the afternoon.

Unfortunately, our taxi driver had to get back to pick up



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## Why Do I Teach?

"Why do you teach?" I was asked yesterday.

"It's such hard work for such low pay."

My answer came fast, "It's what I love to do."

They said, "Well, you're amazing." I said, "Thank you."

But if I can express this more clearly

Maybe others will hold this work more dearly.

I have a passion for living in a world where we all care for one another,

Where the planet we live on is respected and loved as our mother,

Where we can see the interconnectedness and the impact we make,

And how good it feels to act out of kindness with nothing to gain.

I teach because I care and because it is the role I can play

To make a positive difference in the world today and everyday.

I see all the pain in our world and when I feel sorrow

My heart bursts with the hope of a new tomorrow.

The more love and care we put out for the world to heal,

The more love we receive and the better we feel.

Teaching is an honor and sometimes that is misunderstood.

So in the end, I teach because it makes me feel good.

It feels good to create a community and instill hope in hearts.

I'm not able to solve all of the world's pain today,

But to teach is a start.

Jen Norris, Rough and Ready CA

