

Dear Friends, Family & Supporters,



Thank you so much for investing in God's work in Albania this summer by your faithful prayers and generous financial gifts. Truly this has been the best summer of my life because of the many fruitful ministries I was a part of and the many deep relationships formed. My team had 24 students and 8 leaders, and each one played a huge role in impacting both each other and the Albanians.

After a few days of team building and training, our team jumped right into preparing for a large high school camp in Tirana, Albania. The two evenings previous to the start of the camp were spent handing out flyers in the city square and parks in hopes of drawing more people to this camp. Although we couldn't speak Albanian, we had a group of several local teenage Christians whose friendliness and translation greatly helped to spread the word about camp. These volunteers were young Christians who were on fire for Jesus and had an evident desire to see Him move in their home country. Throughout the week, some of our deepest friendships came from these teenage volunteers, as well as camp attendees.



LEFT: Worshipping God with our team and the Albanian volunteers in six different languages was one of the highlights of my trip.

MIDDLE: Camp volunteers and I
RIGHT: Games at camp

In the high school camp, our team was able to bond with the Albanian students over fun games and activities. Eventually we were able to lead them in worship and use a tool called Soularium to engage in spiritual conversations with them. Nearly every day of the camp, each person on the Mk2Mk team asked one or two Albanian students to coffee, where relationships were deepened and the gospel was shared on a more individual basis. Going for coffee with friends is a huge part of Albanian culture, so the chance to use that as a way of spreading the Gospel was exciting for many students, although slightly out of our comfort zones. Finally, camp ended with a drama that I took part in, as well as a testimony and gospel presentation.



LEFT: Soularium, a picture game used to share the Gospel

MIDDLE: Introducing our team to the students

RIGHT: Lori, an Albanian volunteer, with my friend Lucy and I before passing out fliers.

The next week brought a huge change of pace as we left camp and dove into a week of three ministries- running a VBS for Roma (gypsy) children; sharing the Gospel in a women's prison; and helping renovate a center for Down Syndrome children. Our group split in half each day, and I chose to stay with the VBS kids for most of the time, which brought me so much joy. The kids were so sweet and loving, and always ready for the fun games, songs, or dancing that filled the days of Vacation Bible School. Although these kids spoke less English than the teens in Tirana, we were able to share Bible stories through a translator and showed them Christ's love through our actions. Although this week of ministry was long and tiring, it ended up being my favorite because of the sweet friendships made with the kids and how much they soaked up the love of Christ. I also had the opportunity to spend one day performing the "Everything Drama" at the prison and share my testimony, as well as paint in the Johnathan Center for Down Syndrome kids, which I was thankful to have been a part of.



LEFT: Games at VBS

MIDDLE: The entire group of staff, Mk2Mk volunteers, and Roma kids at

RIGHT: The team of staff and volunteers



LEFT/MIDDLE: Me with Klea, Paulina, and Romina, three girls who I had the joy of showing Christ's love to for a week.

RIGHT: Me and a teammate Lauren with three Roma boys enjoying their ice cream.



Rolled paper art designs were used both for therapy and a business at the Johnathan center.



My teammates and I helping paint the Johnathan Center. On this day we also got the blessing of playing with some of the kids there!

Nearly halfway through the missions trip, we switched locations from the capital city of Tirana to a small town called Lezhe. Although it was hard to leave Tirana, where we were comfortable and settled in, this change drew us closer as a team and helped us trust God more. In Lezhe, our ministry was to high schoolers in the camp we ran, as well as to encourage the small church there. This camp looked very similar to the one in Tirana; with its games, dancing, testimonies, Soularium, coffee, and drama, just on a much smaller scale. Because of the small size of the group we were ministering to in Lezhe, it was easy to feel discouraged, but we continued to trust in God and have faith that His work would be done. In the end, the pastors of the church in Lezhe were extremely encouraged by our group, assuring us that our being there had greatly uplifted them and that we, as the biggest Christian group ever to come to Lezhe, had made a lasting impact on the city. Indeed, by the end of the camp, many unbelievers decided to give their life to Christ! As we had more time in Lezhe, we were also able to do public evangelism using worship and the Everything drama. Through this, many people were able to hear to good news of the Gospel and for one person, even commit their life to Christ and get plugged into the church in Lezhe.



LEFT: Coffee time; where we shared the good food, coffee, and the life-changing Gospel.



MIDDLE: Lezhe camp group: the Mk2Mk team and Albanian students



RIGHT: Albanian dancing at camp!



LEFT: Teaching Albanians the Cotton Eye Joe

MIDDLE: Introducing my team at camp, "Team Everest"

RIGHT: Performing the Everything drama at a public park in Lezhe.

Throughout the whole trip, three things were a real encouragement to me. One, was that our ministry was not separate from our normal life. Wherever we went, our team befriended and encouraged those around us. In fact, staff members of our hotel in Tirana cried when we left because they would miss our friendship and constant laughter and joy. Second, I knew that our work there was not fleeting nor in vain because of the way we were so connected to local Christians. At each camp, our team made a point to get new Christians involved with the church near them so that they can continue to grow in their faith. In addition to this, the volunteers at both camps befriended the new Christians so that they could continue to be strong in their belief. Lastly, the intentionality and encouragement that I received from my own team of Mk's was a huge blessing. The constant building up, one-on-one quality time, affirmation, and gifts that we shared were what kept us thriving amidst tiring days of ministry.



LEFT: Building relationships with two Albanian girls who did not believe in Christ and connecting them with an Albanian volunteer.



RIGHT: Some of our Mk2Mk team with Julia (center), the receptionist at Vila 60 who became a close friend.

Lastly, my letter would be incomplete if I did not mention the small groups and Bible study that helped me grow closer in my walk with God throughout the whole trip. Our Bible study went through a book called the *Gospel Centered Life for Teens*, which really helped deepened my understanding of God's grace and justice, as well as my own sin. My small group was even more impactful to my faith and relationships with others as my small group leader took time to challenge and encourage me in my faith, and the whole group was willing to be vulnerable with their stories. These girls helped me realize the insane love that God has for each person and how little we deserve any of His mercy. Not only that, they were a constant encouragement and greatly shaped my experience on the trip.



My Bible Study group



The whole Mk2Mk Albania 2017 team- these people are on fire for Jesus and love others with His love! I have been so blessed by them.



My small group- so much joy and laughter shared with them!



My small group leader, Josephine, who taught me about intentionality, leadership, trust, and most importantly, Jesus Christ!

Thank you so much for supporting me- without you, I would have never been able to go on this trip. Your investment has made a huge difference in the lives of so many Albanian students, children, prisoners, pastors, volunteers, and workers. Thank you again for your generosity, I know the Kingdom has advanced by your gifts and faithfulness in prayer for me and this team. God bless you!