

Global Friends: This note just arrived from Michelle Crottier, writing from the ECC in India. A joyful recounting of the experiences of the past week!

Hello everyone back home! We have now settled into life at the ECC in Whitefield, India. Many people have expressed how much they enjoy India, even in the short time we've been here! That certainly wasn't the case the night we left Egypt - so many of us were sad at leaving the city we'd come to know and love. At our last night at the Cosmo, we shared a cake with Wallid and Azza while Lindsey and Laura read a list of memories of Egypt. Our goodbyes to Azza and Wallid were heartfelt, and several of us exchanged email addresses with them. Then onto a plane for Mumbai, with a stop in the United Arab Emirates.

We landed in Mumbai, India -- old Bombay. Our first impression of the city was HUMIDITY!!! We stayed in the YMCA where we enjoyed air conditioned rooms and cable TVs. Since our time there was short and structured, we only got a chance to go out and see the surrounding area for one lunch and during the evenings. There was a movie theater down the street, so some of us were introduced to Bollywood, the Indian answer to Hollywood.

We woke up the day we were to leave Mumbai for Bangalore only to find out 4 of us had come down with a mean 24hr flu bug. The rest of us did what we could to make the travel day as easy as possible for them. Two days later, in the ECC, two more people came down with the Global Bug. In another two days, the seventh and so far final globalite became ill. We are now about 4 days into a streak of good health! We are all very glad Char did NOT fall ill after nursing all the sick children back to health.

The ECC is a great change of pace since we each have singles, except Bill and Char of course. We have our own bathrooms even, complete with cold showers and a solar-warmed faucet for bucket showers. The grounds are fenced, so we feel very secluded and relaxed on campus. Downtown Bangalore, a large city, is only about a 45 minute ride by rickshaw, so we get the best of both worlds! (A rickshaw is a three-wheeled alternative to a cab, minus the muffler and enclosing doors. They're so much fun, and cheaper than cabs!)

We are becoming familiar with MG Road (Mahatma Gandhi) in Bangalore and all its saree shops. Most of the girls are good friends with the tailor in Whitefield that makes the saree blouses. A few stalwart souls (Andy P., Jay, Mike, Andy W.) have made it to the 6:00 *AM* yoga class regularly. We have the option of 5 meals each day -- breakfast @ 8, morning tea @ 10:30, lunch @ 12:30, afternoon tea @ 4:30 and supper @ 7. The other day we were on a bus at afternoon tea, but the ECC travel staff didn't skip a beat! They whipped out some cookies, bananas and mango juice boxes at 4:30 on the dot!

Just before tea time, we had been escorted through a village to the sound of drums for a traditional welcoming. We were even more on display than the villagers, I think -- those that joked about being in a parade on the streets of Cairo had their wish come true! The

most exciting part for Lauren G., though, was when we saw some monkeys jump from a roof to a tree, and disappear in the palm fronds. By the end of the village tour, the drum beat had Jay, Nathan, Brooke, Katie and Michelle dancing in the streets. All in all, it was an awesome experience.

A couple of other places of interest we have seen were a Jain temple and Sai Baba's Ashram. The Ashram was a strange mix of egalitarianism, religious tolerance, and a guy in an orange galabeia with a huge fro plastered everywhere. Many of us agree that he is doing good things, but question why his picture is in every room of the free hospital his organization built, at least once. The Jain temple is in the process of being built - it was started in 1989. The stone work was amazing, but we were by far more excited by the troupe of monkeys that came to share our leftover bananas.

We are enjoying the beautiful sunshine, 70-80 degree days, occasional rain showers, and cool evenings. The birds sing sweetly, though a little too loudly, morning, noon and night, and the 4 inch millipedes add a little spice. The 5 foot cobra skin Michelle found is a bit unsettling, but no one has seen the owner, yet.

Until the next update, ta ta!

The Global Semester