

# A Reflection

## - Connor Fallon

This April vacation, members of the Old North Church Youth Group went to the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota for a mission trip. This trip proved to be a life-changing experience for all of the individuals involved. I for one, as a member of the Youth Group, was in awe of the reservation as soon as I exited the airplane. South Dakota is nothing like the densely populated state of Massachusetts. All one could see was snow covered plains with roaming buffalo and wild horses. As we drove to our destination we saw the vast plains of South Dakota and the “bad lands.”

When we arrived at our Tree of Life guest home, we unpacked and had a brief orientation. One of the Tree of Life leaders, Donna, told us of the alcoholism, the high suicide rate of the young, and the conditions they live under, which shocked all of us.

We participated in service activities that ranged immensely, from organizing food packages to painting and fixing houses. Every night there was a cultural event. At these events, we learned about the history and hardships involved in the reservation.

At the end of the week we reflected on what we had learned and how we felt from enduring the entire experience. Roy Martin, a chaperone noted: “Lakota people are very humble and strong people.” One of the Lakota people noted: “It's terrible what has happened in Boston and all these bad things, but it's people like you that make life worth living.” This was just one of the many people who told us how grateful they were and how we gave them hope.

The trip pushed us all out of our comfort zones and transformed us into better people. As for the people of Rosebud, I have faith in them and believe they can rejuvenate their culture. I have learned from the Indians that life is unfair and one can either accept it and make the best of it, or let life bring you down.