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WRIT 220

Professor Cohen

9/29/2010

The School Trip

The buses rolled up to the end of a windy trail and came to a slow and easy stop.

We all looked out the windows of the bus expecting to see an amazing site yet we were met with an empty valley with a small chalky trail leading off into the distance. We were on a big school trip from the American Embassy School in New Delhi, India. We were going on an eight day rafting trip down the Ganges river in the Himalayas. We had been on a bus for the last eight hours and most of us were cranky and tired of being stuffed up in the small space.

"What's going on? Is the bus broken? What are we going to do?" said a worrisome girl behind me. At that moment our guide came onto the bus with a wide smile and said "Okay kids, let's go." Our guide was a short white haired British man who must have been in his forties, he was wearing hiking gear and had a large pair of sunglasses hanging from around his neck. He appeared very friendly so we all stood up, dawned our packs and followed him. Slowly and carefully we climbed off the bus into the warm dry heat of the Himalaya mountains and stared out at the sky. The sky was so different to me up in the mountains, the sky was much darker than I have ever seen before and the sun appeared to be twice the size it normally was down on the ground. After we took in the beautiful landscape, our guide rounded us up and led us down the chalky white path we had seen from the bus.

Kanya Zillmer 9/29/10 10:00 PM

Comment: "We were..."

Kanya Zillmer 9/29/10 10:00 PM

Comment: "We were..." – Maybe combine with the previous sentence.

Kanya Zillmer 9/29/10 10:04 PM

Comment: Let the dialogue reveal that she is worrisome! It already does.

Kanya Zillmer 9/29/10 10:05 PM

Comment: "..., wearing hiking gear with a large pair..." is more succinct

Kanya Zillmer 9/29/10 10:07 PM

Comment: "appeared" might leave the reader feeling unsure about the character

Kanya Zillmer 9/29/10 10:05 PM

Comment: "donned"

Kanya Zillmer 9/29/10 10:09 PM

Comment: No need to say this twice – "mountains, much darker"...

Kanya Zillmer 9/29/10 10:10 PM

Comment: ADD: Comment

The walk took us nearly an hour as we trudged down the mountain with all of our gear strapped to our backpacks, but we did not care because we could hear the river ahead of us. As we came over the last hill we saw a white sandy beach next to the wide and raging Ganges river. We gave up a loud scream of excitement as we came to the beach and began to run around in excitement going in and out of the water. After a few hours of this fun we were rounded up and told about all the activities that we would be doing from the white water rafting to helping repair an Indian school house. After we had all received the orientation we were given a nice dinner and then sent to the tents in order for us to go to bed and get a good night sleep for the next day.

Kanya Zillmer 9/29/10 10:10 PM

Comment: ADD: Comma

Kanya Zillmer 9/29/10 10:11 PM

Comment: Why no contraction?

The first two days were an interesting experience as we got an interesting introduction on how to white water raft safely. However on the third day we began to do things outside of white water rafting. On the third day we visited a small Indian school that was in need of disrepair, and it remains one of the most humbling experiences of my life. The school was small nearly the size of a small bedroom and the paint was peeling. There was no electricity and no insulation in the school house so the children were often cold as school during the winter. As we entered the school building we saw two children receiving lessons from a young male teacher. The children struck me, both of them were maybe six or seven year old boys but it was hard to tell their age; they were so skinny that you could almost see their heart beat underneath their dark skin. They stood up slowly to give us a heartwarming greeting with a wide warm smile and bright eyes yet when they stood I could feel a cold chill flow down my spine like icy water. I could see that they were skinny starving children, who had probably only last eaten three days ago, but when they stood I was shocked because I could actually see their bones. Their feet were in a high arch from the contracting skin and you could probably poke a hole right through them like a pencil being

Kanya Zillmer 9/29/10 10:18 PM

Comment: Repetitive

Kanya Zillmer 9/29/10 10:28 PM

Comment: "In need of repair" or "in disrepair"

Kanya Zillmer 9/29/10 10:22 PM

Comment: Unnecessary

pushed through two thin sheets of cardboard. Despite the pain they must be in from starving the children waved to us and weakly said thank you as we came into the school.

After we had all entered the small room the teacher stood up and began to talk to our guide, whom could speak Hindi fluently. They talked for a while and as they did I could see that even with the sixteen of us that were in the room we had already nearly filled it up. I was amazed that such a school could work with such poor conditions. The children must have to work **real hard** to learn even the most common studies without the aid of textbooks and the incredibly powerful and addicting internet. Our guide came back and told us that the teacher was very thankful for **our help**. We all smiled and said "You're welcome." in a loud and cheerful tone although we knew that the teacher probably didn't understand a word we said.

Kanya Zillmer 9/29/10 10:26 PM

Comment: Poor word choice

Kanya Zillmer 9/29/10 10:34 PM

Comment: What help? Unclear

The teacher ushered the school children outside to a small picnic bench and continued his lesson so we could work. We went out to the van to recover the supplies that we had taken with us and organized ourselves into specialized groups: one for painting, one for sweeping, one for gravel duty, and one for desk and chair assembly. I was with the painting corps and proudly took my brush into the school and positioned myself along the wall next to the chalk board. We began to paint the interior of the school in a peachy color that seemed to make the room glow and warm around us. I felt incredibly good to be helping these children because I had never expected that there could actually be people that lived in the ways I saw.

The painting was going by quickly and in an hour we had gotten the first coat of paint on the wall so we decided to split up and help the other groups while we waited for the paint to dry. I decided to go outside and help out the gravel team. The work outside was slow because the bags of gravel weighed roughly thirty pounds each and each of us could barely hold up the bags. Our objective was to lay out a gravel path from the door of the school to the edge of the road in

between wooden path markers that were placed several weeks earlier. The work was more rough than it was tedious but we began to make good progress and within an hour we had laid down good sized path of gravel to the road. We still needed to put down more gravel to make the path solid enough to not wash away in the rain but I was once again needed to help put on a second coat of paint and returned to my original post.

I finished off the day painting and assembling some of the last few chairs that were in the school. As we prepared to leave I took a moment to look at our work. It was not the most professional of jobs and in some spots I could see that someone forgot to apply the second coat of paint. The school desks we assembled were not the best quality and very simple and quaint but I thought that overall we had done a good job improving the lives of the children that attend this school. I stepped outside and saw that the gravel team had finally managed to, after five hours of careful work, finish the gravel path and were cleaning up their work. Our guide gathered us together and congratulated us on a work well done and told us that what he had done here today would make these kids lives better and happier. It was a simple little speech but I honestly felt that we truly had made a difference in the lives of these kids.

We finished off the trip by continuing on down the river by raft and making various stops to do various activities, but I could not stop thinking about the good I had done back at the school. When we returned to New Delhi and arrived at the school our teachers asked us what our favorite part of the trip was. Most of my peers gave answers such as "The rafting trip was the best part." or "Going to the big rock and jumping off of it was fun." and others continued on but I did not think any of that was the best. "What was your favorite part Anthony?" my homeroom teacher asked me. I gave a grin and said, "The school trip."

Kanya Zillmer 9/29/10 10:43 PM

Comment: "activities"

Kanya Zillmer 9/29/10 10:44 PM

Comment: Which school?

Kanya Zillmer 9/29/10 10:49 PM

Comment: Nice work! The descriptive qualities of the introduction don't continue through the rest of the story quite as much, as it becomes more plot, but it does move the story. Nice read!