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West Side Service Project  
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It is comforting to believe that, if you take two children from separate areas code and track their life progression—at each pivotal moment those 2 children would be offered the same opportunities to succeed—regardless of their socioeconomic or geopolitical surrounding. Unfortunately, that belief that is superficially comforting is also poignantly misleading. The plight of that difference, between what we want to believe and what we need to see, was brought to my attention in a striking fashion during my West Side Service Opportunity. Within tour, I was given a glimpse into how powerfully suffocating a child or adult's surrounding environment can be on their achieving chemical reconfiguration, magnificent change also seemed to be on the precise for people in West Side. That change, I believe, will be coming from the very same mentality that made the surroundings I grew up both comforting and inspiring, denizens committed to their community. What I saw at the West Side project was a group of people, led notably by a community Reverend, who are focused on bringing the West Side to a status of respectability and admiration. And it is being accomplished not through written word, by purposeful action—and it was absolutely awe-inspiring to see the seminal aspects of change taking place.

Although I was inspired by the multifaceted approach I saw taking place, there was one nagging deterrent to the areas advancement that I noticed while on the tour. There opportunity to engender enterprise, at an economically profitable rate seemed painfully lacking in the area. A paradigm shift in commerce—that began with the homogenous franchising of American cities; a process that took the business out of the hands of many and into the pockets of few. I noticed this as we drove past several buildings that once seemed to be viable business—be it a grocery store, hardware store, local burger place or convenience store that had all been abandoned—with the only running business left the same ones that dot the exit signs of every American highway. That process affects a location like West Side profoundly because its current residents to not drive into a big city for corporate jobs, or own private offices for their craft---it was a neighborhood built upon local economic trade

that had its major source of funds transplanted to a strip mall. This is not to say that West Side is pitted in a hopeless fight against an enemy it cannot defeat—it is just to say that the issues present in West Side are not monophasic and not immediately dissolvable. However, with the work of the community, I do feel confident that the West Side is heading in a direction toward progress and change. One that I am proud to have seen and the lessons that I learned during this project will serve me greatly when I become a physician and think about how I want to achieve a transformative impact on a community.