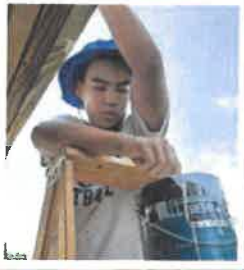


Jason Kwo

CCCS Class of 2017

MY PERSPECTIVE

JASON KWO '21



Kwo during the summer 2018 mission trip to Jasper, Ga.



Jason Kwo '21 is president of Jesuit's Pro-Life Club and a member of the football team, and he annually has been one of Jesuit's top students in Class Achievement.

I trust this email finds you well. It is with sincere disappointment that I write to inform you of the need to cancel this summer's Jasper Mission Trip.

Sigh. I'd figured this was coming, but the email made it real. The 2020 Jesuit mission trip to Georgia wasn't happening.

The two previous summers, I'd traveled to Jasper, Ga. with a group of 20+ Jesuit classmates for a week of manual labor and brotherhood. It was my annual chance to meet new people and to experience the beauty of this small, verdant town. Most importantly, the trip was a way of caring for those in tremendous need.

Whether it was mowing lawns, painting fences, or listening to the locals' stories, the Jasper trip allowed me to make a difference in people's lives. Every moment spent serving the community filled my heart with joy. However, because of COVID-19, it was clear that the 2020 mission trip would not be possible. I immediately asked myself, "So, what

do I do now?" It seemed there were no opportunities to serve; the world was shut down.

Seeking service opportunities, I remembered the tutoring program at Jesuit, in which students use their academic abilities to support their peers. This kind of academic camaraderie has been an integral part of my Jesuit experience, and I realized that I could carry it beyond the halls of Jesuit. I could tutor over the summer. It didn't sound quite as exciting as an immersive mission trip to Georgia, but I could still impact those in need. I emailed my middle school, asking if they had any students in need of a tutor.

Sure enough, there would be an in-person summer school program for the students who struggled with virtual learning. They needed a tutor who could connect the dots, preparing the kids for the next school year. What an amazing opportunity!

For four weeks, Monday through Friday, I guided young students in strengthening their academic

skills (socially distanced, of course). I spent much time with two students in particular, Jayden and Samara. Both of them needed to solidify their foundations in math. Week by week, I discovered the different ways in which Jayden and Samara learned best, such as the "Gallon Man" and word problems involving cookies. Always cookies. I was overjoyed as they experienced more and more "A-HA!" moments, and what struck me most was the complete shift in their attitude toward learning. They started summer school reluctantly, yet by the end of the first week I was always greeted by beaming smiles and "What's up, Mr. Jason!"

COVID-19 upended many service opportunities offered to Jesuit students, yet it also pushed us to seek new possibilities. I don't need to look far to be a 'Man for Others.' In my own community, I got to help a group of kids grow in their love for learning, and they helped me grow in my love for serving others. ☺