



PETRI'S EXPERIENCES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN KENYA

This past February, the PETRI leadership team traveled to Kenya to meet their 62 scholarship recipients. MaryMargret Welch worked extremely hard to organize this amazing trip. In addition, the presidents of Girls 2 Girls, Dan Welch, Judy Gin, Christine Benita, Gail and Hazel Sehlhorst and Aubrey Kraabel attended the trip. This incredible group of people visited several schools in Taita-Taveta Kenya to meet students and staff members. After a few days of exploring Kenyan wildlife, the presidents of the club (Lucy Cleator and Quinn Casey) along with the upcoming presidents (Ryan Beebe, Audrey Nordstrom and Susanna Blohm) got the opportunity to formally meet some scholarship recipients. The first interaction with the students was a presentation led by Ryan and Susanna about elephant poaching. Shortly after the presentation, the girls took a safari with the students. This was several of the students' first safari and the girls shared that "it was an incredible thing to experience with them."

The next day, the group attended a church service where they met all 62 of the scholars. The service helped educate the PETRI girls on Kenyan culture. The service ended with the group introducing themselves and congratulating the students on their hard work! After the service, everyone had "Sunday interaction," giving everyone an opportunity to get to know each other. The girls of PETRI got to spend time and create deeper bonds with the students. The next three days were dedicated to visiting schools. PETRI sponsors 10 different schools. At each school, the group got a warm welcome with an assembly! The students expressed their gratitude through song and dance.

Later, the girls joined the students in class. During this time they would experience the typical school day of their scholarship recipients. After shadowing the students at school, the girls had more bonding time with the students. Everyone listened to music, made bracelets, and had sporadic dance parties! Another amazing opportunity the group had during this trip was two home visits! Two of the students gave the group tours of their homes, introduced them to their families, and explained more about their stories. This helped the girls to gain more insight on the students everyday lives. This experience helped the girls to better "understand the lifestyles that the students write about in their application letters". The trip to Kenya is an amazing experience and an incredible opportunity for the club. Meeting the students makes PETRI's mission much more personable and motivating. The opportunity to visit Kenya is an amazing element of the club, and it is an inspiring reminder of how important PETRI'S mission is.