GLOBAL TEACHERS
SOUTH AFRICA - 2016

Bringing the world to North Carolina classrooms

understand. connect. act.
North Carolina teachers representing 14 counties traveled to South Africa with Go Global NC in June of 2016 for a leadership development program designed to help them bring the world to their classrooms. The group visited schools, communities, game preserves and areas of historic and cultural significance in South Africa’s three largest cities: Durban, Cape Town, and Johannesburg. Go Global NC has been providing international leadership programs for North Carolina teachers representing all subject areas, grades and regions of the state, since the late 1990s.

“Transformative. Captivating. Real. Powerful. Authentic. These words describe the experience that I had in the great country of South Africa... This experience has taught me that 1. People are people; 2. We are global citizens; and 3. We have a collective responsibility to make our world a better place.”

Che-Von Stone
Principal, Cedar Fork Elementary School
Wake County
On the final day of their South Africa experience, N.C. teachers shared initial aspirations about how they would use what they learned to transform their teaching:

- Have students consider the following question from both a U.S. and South Africa perspective: “Can we have a balance between urbanization and the conservation of resources and wildlife?”
- Broaden science lessons about biodiversity – as with plants and animals, diversity is the foundation and strength of humankind.
- Partner with 1st grade classroom in Cape Town to engage N.C. students in critical conversations about themselves, their classmates, and the world more broadly.
- I learned the only way to move forward is to truly see the past and give people a way to tell their account of their experience. Using the large pageantry puppets of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, I hope to work with students to tell the diverse stories the histories of our two countries.

“I have continually been amazed at the parallels I have seen between the U.S. and South Africa on every level – socially, politically, and economically. Seeing South Africa fighting to establish a better future while honoring its past has made me realize that we, as Americans, could learn much from their experiences.”

Nancy Goodnight
5th Grade Teacher, Millbridge Elementary School
Rowan-Salisbury Schools
“Ubuntu...I am, because you are.”

Ninth-grade English and African-American literature teacher Matt Scialdone shared his South African adventure with the Wake County Public Schools News Blog. Excerpts from his essay are reprinted here.

After each excursion, our bus became an impromptu professional development meeting. The Go Global NC teachers immediately wanted to discuss ways to share what we had just experienced with our kids and colleagues. Pictures of clouds rolling over the top of Table Mountain will likely be used as “inspiration material” for my students’ haiku writing, and those same pictures will be put to use by the meteorology fans in the Middle Creek science department.

We visited sites that served as a stark reminder of South Africa’s troubling past. We walked though Mahatma Gandhi’s home in Durban, a home that had at one time been burned down by the imperialist oppressors who saw his message of peaceful protest as a threat. Touring the Apartheid Museum brought to mind many connections to our own nation’s shameful history of slavery and segregation.

The South Africans do not “sugar-coat” or try to hide these parts of their history. Rather, they acknowledge them as learning opportunities to remind themselves and the world, in the late President Nelson Mandela’s words, “Never, never again.” We had an amazing “full circle” moment when we visited the site where Mandela cast his first vote. That momentous occasion occurred in a school.

There is a word from the Bantu language—“Ubuntu”—which loosely translates as “I am, because you are.” It is the idea that we exist to help each other. Many point to the spirit of Ubuntu—championed by Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu—as the guiding principle that led South Africa out of apartheid towards becoming the “Rainbow Nation” of today.

We experienced Ubuntu throughout our travels in South Africa. From the warm hospitality we were shown at every stop in our journey to the openness of the people we met. Teaching is the very essence of Ubuntu, and all of the participants of this program will carry the lessons we learned in South Africa forever.

Read the full essay: www.wcpss.net/Page/24606
The Go Global NC South Africa trip was a personal pilgrimage, as well as a priceless opportunity to grow and develop as an educator. Like most African Americans, I dreamed and romanticized about traveling to Africa, the land of my ancestors. I could never have imagined how the sights, sounds, and smells would evoke emotions within my total being.

Monique Simmons
Biology Teacher
Middle Creek High School
Wake County

“It was after I went to South Africa that I became what I am now.”

- Mohandas K. Gandhi
I have been inspired by the resilience of the human spirit and the overwhelming joy and community we found in places where people have so little. This experience has grounded me in what really matters – being connected to those around me, being aware of the world more globally and striving to continually learn and find ways to make the world a better place.

Lisa Langford
1st Grade Teacher
Cameron Park
Elementary School
Orange County
Schools
A key element I noticed from observations and discussions with students and educators is the commitment to educating the whole child.

Melissa Stout
Social Studies Teacher
West McDowell Middle School
McDowell County Schools

Travis Jones, a history teacher at J.D. Clement Early College High School in Durham, takes time out to reflect at the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg.
GLOBAL TEACHERS 2016 - SOUTH AFRICA IS SPONSORED BY

Alamance Area Chamber of Commerce

The Beattie Foundation

The Borchardt Fund of the Triangle Community Foundation

The Mariam and Robert Hayes Charitable Trust

The James G. K. McClure Fund for Education and Development of the Western North Carolina Community Foundation

The Blanche and Julian Robertson Family Foundation

The Dan Royster Memorial Fund

68 T.W. Alexander Drive • Box 13628 • Research Triangle Park, NC  27709 • phone: 919.314.2826

goglobalnc.org