

Working with Dreamcatcher allowed me to meet a couple of my personal goals for 2015: 1) to travel abroad and 2) to do some random (and not-so-random) acts of kindness during the last two weeks of December. While I spent only two weeks in Melkhoutfontein, I had enough time to be productive and enjoy getting to know my host family and the community.

My volunteer work included the task of conducting a pre-assessment so that when the PaintUp with Kamamma project is completed, a post-assessment will measure the project's impact. Being able to measure the project's impact is important for finding funders and reporting to those funders and other stakeholders, including the community. I was thrilled to be asked to take some of the "before" photographs and conduct a pre-assessment survey with homeowners. I worked alongside Katrina from the Dreamcatcher office. We went to more than 55 homes and spoke with each resident about the project.



Postcard



From: Angela, Illinois, United States

Volunteered in:

Melkhoutfontein, Stilbaai,
6674, South Africa

When: 2016

After asking the residents the survey questions, I took photographs of them in front of their homes. I then went to the Dreamcatcher office and entered data for each resident and processed the “before” photos. In addition, I was able to meet four of the local and young artists who will be helping to paint the houses in their community along with the professional artists and volunteers who are scheduled to arrive later this year. These tasks were the perfect way for me to meet many people in the community. While we had made no appointments with anyone, all the homeowners welcomed me, a stranger from the United States, into their homes and invited me to sit down to discuss their community. They even willingly stood in front of their homes, so I could take the necessary photographs.

When I wasn't busy conducting the pre-assessment, I had my camera out taking photos of the natural surroundings of the Dreamcatcher office, of Melkhoutfontein and of Stilbaai. These photos will remind me what a beautiful place this is. However, the beauty is found not only in the surroundings but also in the people who live there. Katrina took me on a hike to see the fish traps where I took some amazing photos (and Katrina took a photo of less-than-amazing me). My host family treated me well. They welcomed me into their home for an extended stay. They fed me and discussed the educational system with me. I watched television with them and enjoyed evenings outside with them.

They took me in to Stilbaai, where I got to take some photos of the harbor. I also got to celebrate New Year's Eve with the family's daughter and her friends at the harbor where we watched fireworks light up the sky above and the water below. The daughter and her friends made sure to include me in their 2016 well wishes at the water's edge. Although this experience did help me meet my personal goals, I shall remember it for the beauty of the people and land and for its showing me how blessed I am.

[Read the report Angela wrote on Changing lives through learning \(PDF\).](#)