

Aurora students fly to Kenya with Me to We



By Brock Weir

?What did you do on March Break??

It's a question just about every student will be asked when they get back to the classroom later this month and some might already have their answers prepared.

Aurora students Adam Pitters-Fisher and Sydney Stevenson, however, are only halfway to learning what their answer will be once they return from Kenya on a mission with Me to We.

Adam, a Grade 12 student, and Sydney, Grade 11, and both students of Pickering College, left Sunday for the east African nation on a humanitarian mission.

As they joined their fellow students in loading their luggage onto the bus on Friday to avoid any last minute wrangling over the weekend, they knew their trip could follow one of three paths: building a school, building a library, or helping to dig a well.

But this is not a Choose Your Own Adventure Story. They knew from the outset they are likely to come back changed individuals.

?This might sound cliché, but this is going to be a reality check,? said Sydney. ?There are so many different parts of the world and we often get caught up in our own lives and what we're doing here that we don't often think about what is going on on the other side of the world, let alone right next door.?

For Adam, who hopes to become a human rights lawyer, he said the trip was bound to be an eye-opener.

?Through this experience, I will come back knowing how some people live, how they are treated fairly, and how there is not really equality in the world,? he said. ?I want to advocate to change that and I think this trip is going to open my eyes to the inequities we don't see every day.?

Pickering College students have a long history with Me to We, which was founded by Craig and Marc Kielburger, an off-shoot of their non-profit Free The Children.

For Sydney, the appeal of signing up for a trip like this was being able to make a difference in such a ?global? world.

After being put through their paces and receiving some tips from facilitators on how to adjust a bit of culture shock, by Friday they were in the zone. Adam joked he was tapering off sugar and caffeine to help ease the transition, first and foremost in their collective consciousness was to keep an open mind.

In addition to their building projects, they were eager to meet the people, including the women of the village they are travelling to, the 'mommas', joining them on their water walks and learning more about the vital roles they play in this developing nation.

'This trip is going to be successful [for us] no matter what we do, whether we're starting work on the well, building a school, or just meeting the children of the village,' said Adam. 'I am excited. I am ready for the change and I am ready to come back someone different. I am ready to understand what is happening around the world and I am not really afraid of what is going to happen.'

Added Sydney: 'No matter what, we have a good group going and we're all going to just dive right in and experience it. I want this experience because we read about it so much and we hear about the different places around the world going through things different than us. To actually experience it firsthand will definitely change my perspective in a good way because we can actually do something about it and think about our world in a different and better way.'