



Servants in Faith and Technology /
Southern Institute for Appropriate Technology
2944 County Road 113, Lineville, Alabama 36266
Phone: (256) 396-2015 Fax: (256) 396-2501 www.sifat.org

Introducing a New Generation to SIFAT

By Matthew Ivey

Student Minister, Brandon FUMC, Brandon, Miss.

I first came to SIFAT around 2004 as a middle school student and fell in love. I attended multiple retreats as a student, and I even helped serve on support staff for summer camp when I was older. If you would have told that 15-year-old kid that he would end up in ministry and serve as a student pastor, he would have laughed at you! Here we are years later, and I have had the opportunity to take my students on a trip to SIFAT!

The world has changed since my days as a student, yet SIFAT is still as relevant, if not more than it ever has been. As I mentor and walk alongside the next generation, I see the need for these firsthand experiences. The Lord used our Learn & Serve Summer Experience in incredible ways. Students that did not know each other are now friends. Students that have been afraid to get involved are now 100% bought in to our student ministry. Through the Global Village Experience, I watched students that complain about silly “First World problems” seriously take a look at their lives and begin to understand how blessed we are.

One student, who is just 13 years old, had had his fill of the Global Village as we prepared ourselves for bed. He was tired and hungry, plus he had not slept outside before. He was all but ready to scream. As we talked and discussed the situation— and how much they had done in the village — he started to calm down. We were able to work through the tired, anxious and overwhelmed feelings to truly appreciate what had happened. It was a breakthrough moment for him, and I will never forget it. I am proud to say that the next day, he was eating crickets! This young man who would not touch the black beans and other foods in the village had overcome those feelings and stepped out of his comfort zone to try eating insects when we were being taught about alternative protein sources that can be used to fight hunger and malnutrition.

I love SIFAT! We can talk and preach about comfort zones and stepping out of those. However, my dear friends and family at SIFAT do it in a practical and meaningful way. I have a small group of brave students that trusted me on this journey that are now advocating for SIFAT and planning our next trip to Alabama. Thank you to the incredible staff at SIFAT. Brandon FUMC loves you, and we cannot wait until we can be together again!



Brandon FUMC participated in our Learn & Serve Summer Experience in July. They are already planning another visit!



Above: While at SIFAT, students explored our Global Village with simulated housing from nine countries and an urban slum.

Left: Students get a hands-on lesson in fuel-efficient cookstoves.