

## Malawi Reflection

By Jesus Figueroa

"The service trip helped me gain a much broader perspective of the world that we live in. It allowed me to see how there are many different and real problems that people are going through across the world, but at the same time, it allowed me to get a sense of how similar our human nature is when we compare ourselves in the simplest ways. Children are children no matter where they live, and everybody goes through similar struggles as they try to find their place in their society. Culture does make us different: we were able to blend with the Malawians only up to a certain level, at which point our cultural contrasts would become widely apparent. But in the deepest sense, God is in all of us, and it is our responsibility to become aware of that and do our best to help improve the well-being of those who need it, and to let ourselves be helped as we need it too."

"This experience is slowly making a long-lasting impact in me. It has raised my interest for issues regarding poverty reduction programs and economic and social development research. It has allowed me to see that I have the potential to be a hand to many other people, and it has strengthened the passion towards social service that I have had for a long time. I admit that it has been difficult to process everything that I learned during those two weeks, but I keep putting all my effort on it. God always finds the way to say to us what we need to hear, and I am staying open to everything that I may keep learning as time goes on. One thing that I know for sure is that I am looking forward to having a similar service experience as soon as I am able to – for if I have the ability to help others, I consider it to be the most rewarding decision to go out and do so."