

## Momentum Blog #2 - The Sacramento Momentum Team

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Hi! Julia here, one of the cool members of the Sacramento Momentum Team, Team Delta! Our team spent most of our time visiting doing six hour presentations for the 8th graders. We worked with two different classes with different dynamics, it was interesting seeing the difference in reaction that the kids of this school had towards each of the activities and talks we presented them with.

We worked with them on two different Workshop topics. One based off of Teamwork and the other on Family. Class A was not only the first class we ever visited as only our team but also probably the sweetest group of students that I have ever met. Because most of the kids within this class had experienced momentum from the previous year they respected the value of the activities we presented them with. They showed their support for each other and respected the advice we gave as their seniors and friends and I.

I was truly moved by how serious they were in wanting to strengthen the relationship they had with their peers. When we went into our group discussions I was really moved by the amount of encouragement they showed each other after each person expressed their true feeling and standpoints. Also when we did the break through activity called the human knot the teamwork they showed made me feel proud at how although they became frustrated with each other they didn't give up.

I learnt so much from these students and I've never been more determined to keep in touch and be there to give support when they need it. Even if the best I can do is stay in contact with them through the internet. Class B on the other hand had a completely different atmosphere. It was a male oriented class room with only one female student which made it hard for me to relate to them as closely. I still learnt a lot although different, I really did love working with these students! Energetic and optimistic, although it was harder to keep them engaged at certain moments, the courage some of the students showed put me in awe.

Despite having a hard life they choose to live it moving forward, taking that step that will make them stronger. On the surface they may pretend to be the cool kids who don't want to do emotional stuff but when we did the break through activity called strong hold I noticed the kids who had a hard time expressing themselves showed the most dedication towards supporting their team mates during this activity and I was truly impressed and proud. The teachers and students of these classes loved their students as if they were everything they had in the world and I loved seeing that and admired that love they had. Ione was truly as school that I absolutely loved visiting and honestly if I ever had the chance to go back I would agree to without even a little hesitation.

Hello readers! This is Jeroko from Team Delta. There was this one school that we had visited multiple times called Ione Junior High and it was quite an experience. At a couple of the classes we presented twice, and you could clearly see the difference in the groups. The first class was full of super sweet, super friendly eighth graders that you could not help but love; one of the girls I had personally grown attached to because she reminded me of another girl that I know. It was so much fun just talking to them and getting to know them. It was very interesting to watch them work together in the different activities that we had planned for them. They were a very attentive class and they made an effort to take the activities seriously and really try to learn something from them. It was also heart-breaking to listen to the pain that they feel with their families at home; many of them feel a lack of appreciation from their families, and they also deal with a lack of love. The only thing I can't understand is how these kids have such unloving families but can still be such lovable angels to us. I really wish I could do more for them but I know that there is a limit to what I can do.

However, I do believe that we left a lasting impression on them and were really grateful for the experience. The other class that we dealt with was quite a bit more challenging; the teacher told us afterwards that many of them were living with drug-dealing parents, are in and out of foster care, or some had parents that were in prison for life. Even though they have all these issues and we try to provide a space for them to share openly, they still wouldn't share because they are so scared that anything they should say would be used against them. Even though they were a more difficult group to deal with, I still found that they are a likable class through the conversations I was able to have with them. They didn't have the sweet personalities like the other class did, but I enjoyed having the pleasure of talking to them.

I think I came to understand kids with these kinds of issues more clearly and I hope at some point in the future they learn how to vocalize them. Ione was a great experience and it really opened my eyes to a wider view of the world. I loved Ione so much and it would be amazing if I could ever have the chance to go back and visit them again.

And lastly, Martin here with a concluding report on my Momentum experience. With a cozy and relaxed vibe, Ione is a small town in Calaveras County, CA with a population of just over seven thousand people. I was excited to meet the kids at the school, both because I liked the town, and because it would be my first ever presentation. Skipping ahead a few hours, I liked where the presentation was going. The kids were attentive and involved, and I could already see us getting through to a few of them. They were getting emotional and there was a sense of raw emotion present in the room. It is a beautiful thing.

Closing that first day at Ione I was content with where we set the bar. The students had an understanding of what we came to do, and they were open to participating. I was ready to return with new topics to cover so we could provide more opportunities for them to express what they never express, and to show how much support they are willing to give to each other. Our general agenda for a presentation consists of an introduction, then a light activity to make the students more comfortable, and then we transition into deeper and more impactful activities.

It brings me joy to be able to connect with the students on so many different levels of emotion. They built bridges and had a blast with each other and with the staff leaders like myself. Then they shared about the struggles they have gone through and are currently going through, bringing many of them to tears. And to cleanly close that, they vocalized to each other how much they are willing to support and help everyone in their presence. It made me feel so fulfilled to know that I was a catalyst in creating the environment that has improved the lives of people.

Moving on from what we did as a team that week, and the tangible shift we saw in the students, we will never be able to gauge how many people those students will help throughout their lives. Momentum gave us the opportunity and the tools to create something magnificent, and we as leaders took that opportunity and utilized those tools to legitimately change the lives of an innumerable amount of people.