

# 2010 Itinerary

MAY 4, 2010 BY [STOKESA \(EDIT\)](#)

- Day 1: Wednesday, May 5th-Depart Portland, OR for Birmingham, AL
- Day 2: Thursday, May 6th-Birmingham Day
- Day 3: Friday, May 7th- Resurrection Parish Day
- Day 4: Saturday, May 8th- Tuskegee Day
- Day 5: Sunday, May 9th- Resurrection Parish Day
- Day 6: Monday, May 10th- Southern Poverty Law Center Day/ Rosa Parks Museum 4pm
- Day 7: Tuesday, May 11th- Montgomery/Selma Day (walking tour?) (Dexter?)
- Day 8: Wednesday, May 12th- Atlanta Day 1
- Day 9: Thursday, May 13th- Atlanta Day 2
- Day 10: Friday, May 14th- Koinania Day 1
- Day 11: Saturday, May 15th- Koinania Day 2
- Day 12: Sunday, May 16th- Jackson Day
- Day 13: Monday May 17th- New Orleans Day 1
- Day 14: Tuesday, May 18th- New Orleans Day 2
- Day 15: Wednesday, May 19th- New Orleans Day 3
- Day 16: Thursday, May 20th- New Orleans Day 4
- Day 17: Friday, May 21st- New Orleans Day 5
- Day 18: Saturday, May 22nd- New Orleans Day 6
- Day 19: Sunday, May 23rd- New Orleans Free Day 7
- Day 20: Monday, May 24th- Travel to Birmingham Day
- Day 21: Tuesday, May 25th- Depart Birmingham, AL for Portland, OR

## Almost Done in Alabama

MAY 10, 2010 BY [STOKESA \(EDIT\)](#)

"The march continues. . ." is the slogan the Southern Poverty Law Center leaves with each visitor. The center was originally founded to offer free legal support to primarily poor, black southerners in anti-discrimination cases. Today it offers tolerance education resources, tracks the activities of hate groups, and continues to work to support those struggling against hate and for justice. It is also the home of the Civil Rights Memorial Monument, a powerful display designed by Maya Lin in honor of 40 people martyred during the civil rights movement. As we all revisited the history of the movement, the SPLC helped us to connect the history to our present. What injustices are occurring in our communities and country and globally today? What can we do about it?

Already, we had lively discussion about WEB DuBois and Booker T. Washington, Tuskegee University and the City of Tuskegee. It made many of us think of our own philosophy of equity in and access to education, about our own University and its relationship to the surrounding community.

We have one more day in Alabama before heading towards Georgia. I have a hunch that tomorrow as we stand in the pulpit of Dr. King's church on Dexter St. and walk over the Edmund Pettis bridge, we all will be sobered by the sacredness of our right to vote and participate in government and community. We walk on sacred ground and carry it's truth with us.

## Hotlanta to Koinonia

MAY 14, 2010 BY [STOKESA \(EDIT\)](#)

We've spent the last few days in the peach state. Yesterday we explored Atlanta, visiting the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center. There we toured his childhood home and saw his and Coretta Scott King's tomb. We walked around Ebenezer Baptist church where King's father and grandfather served as pastors and King himself served briefly as an associate pastor. For lunch we grabbed a bite at the diverse and colorful Sweet Auburn market.

Today we arrived in Americus, rural Georgia, home of Jimmy Carter. We are staying at Koinonia Farm, a community created by Clarence Jordan over 60 years ago. Koinonia means community or commune and was very controversial throughout the 60s when Jordan invited blacks and whites to live and work together in segregated Georgia. Some of the original partners at Koinonia founded the organization known today as Habitat for Humanity. It is through this organization that we will be working to build a house in New Orleans. Today the residents of Koinonia support themselves communally through pecan farming and sustainable lifestyles.

This beautiful rural farm is a nice change of pace from the cities we've been touring. Tonight we plan to relax and enjoy ourselves with a bonfire and reflection time.

To learn more about Koinonia check out their [site](#).

## This is Complicated

MAY 21, 2010 BY [STOKESA \(EDIT\)](#)

Today Gerald, Kiva and Lisa worked alongside us at the Habitat Build. It was their first time putting in "sweat equity" hours. Habitat is not a giveaway program. In addition to a down payment and monthly mortgage payments, homeowners invest hundreds of hours of their own labor (sweat equity) into building their Habitat house and the houses of others. Once a family qualifies to receive a Habitat for Humanity house, they put in 30 hours, then are able to choose a site for their new home. Kiva and Gerald have been partners for 35 years, since he was 19 and she was 16. Lisa is their 19 year old daughter.

In the morning, all three were pretty quiet. Lisa escaped into her headphones, Gerald answered questions with one or two words, Kiva mostly smiled or nodded. This was our fourth day building, so we'd mostly hit a stride and went right to work pulling out tools, ladders, and setting up projects. How strange it must have felt to start working on a house with these young students from across the country. Once things got going, Gerald worked with a few of us under the house. He still said little, but after Kiva came to check on him, he mentioned that he'd had three heart attacks. The most recent was just three weeks ago. I also heard that Kiva had knee problems. Work like this was hard for them, but I heard no complaints.

Hours went by. After lunch, all three worked with a few of us on a project. It was frustrating. The ladders were beat up and uneven, the ground was too hilly or too holey, the tape we were trying to remove was baked on the window frames and the screws we were trying to re-install just wouldn't line up. But suddenly, something magical happened. I asked the family where a movie theater was. It got them chatting and laughing about the aquarium and IMax. Then I asked for a recommendation for good crawfish. More laughing, debating and chatting. Then we were chatting about Portland and our Civil Rights trip. Hearing about our volunteer work, Gerald asked if anyone had been to Haiti and I told him only me, but before the earthquake. Then, they asked where we were when Katrina hit. We said, "watching it all on the news...where were you." And the story poured out...

Kiva was working at Charity Hospital. Before Katrina, Charity Hospital was the public option for the families who lacked insurance and for those who needed health care. It also trained doctors for war situations and had emergency trauma centers for treatment of the many gunshot victims who too regularly end up in the city. When the flood happened, Kiva told us that the generators were in the basement and stopped working once water took over. Many people were depending on machines and electricity for their lives. Many lives were lost. She talked about being a short woman who couldn't walk through the water to safer ground. Lisa told us about being trapped on a roof and water being dropped from helicopters, only to have it burst and be wasted when it hit the roof. She and Gerald also talked about their experience in the Super Dome and their trek to rescue Kiva from the hospital. When they returned to New Orleans after evacuation, they found that wasn't ruined by water in their home, was looted.

These are the families that Habitat for Humanity, NOLA is helping to rebuild, restart and recover. We are startled that five years later, so many neighborhoods still look like a war zone. We are moved by the creativity and community we have found. We are disturbed by encounters with overwhelming poverty and institutional segregation. We are invigorated by citizens who give of their time, energy and money to love their neighbor. We are constantly furrowing our brow to say, "this is complicated."