

Morgan Fisher's Lumos Journey With JAM International

Pre-Departure

For 10 years, I have had strong ties with South Africa and carried a heartbeat for JAM International. I believe it was predestined that I was to experience life in South Africa after college, but I simply did not know how that would be possible.

The people I admire most in this life are the dream makers. My parents were my dream makers when I wanted to attend Belmont University for the Social Entrepreneurship program. Peter and Ann Pretorius, founders of JAM International were my dream makers when I wanted to be a part of something bigger than myself and started volunteering for their organization. When I discovered the Lumos Travel Scholarship, I knew that whoever had this vision to change students lives through global travel, was a dream maker.

I was in Cape Town, South Africa with Belmont University on a Maymester trip. There was a girl there on the Lumos Travel Scholarship that we met who expressed her extreme gratitude for Cynthia Leu and the Lumos Foundation. When I heard about this foundation and Cynthia's vision for young people, I knew she was one of those "dream makers." As I fell more in love with South Africa on my Maymester trip, I returned to Nashville with a deep desire to return to South Africa on a long term trip to discern if it would be a place that I would want to live someday.

When I dreamt up my Lumos Scholarship Proposal and had my Lumos Interview, I dreamt big. However, I could never have written the story that unfolded as a result of this life altering experience. Not only were my greatest dreams and desires fulfilled, but experiences I could not have dreamt up myself.

The Journey

The company culture at Joint Aid Management plays a massive role in their success and it was one of the things I looked most forward to. I have never seen community, faith, and professionalism lived out so eloquently in a workplace. It was and continues to be an absolute privilege and honor to be working alongside the JAMily.



I interned as the Global Marketing Manager. My work focus was on digitally marketing all JAM Global offices: JAM International, South Africa, Canada, Switzerland, Germany, United

States and Norway. Each day I felt that I was increasing in wisdom because of the leadership I was surrounded by. I learned about global campaigns, niche markets, effective communication, analyzing social media productivity, and so much more! I was so encouraged by the people I was surrounded by. Though this experience challenged me, it developed me professionally.

Not much later after I arrived to South Africa, I quickly got my things settled in and was informed that I would be traveling with the JAM Media team and founder, Peter Pretorius, to Angola that very same week.

Angola: [Watch Here](#)

The JAM Media team and I landed in Benguela, Angola on my 22nd birthday. From 6 burly men with a history of living in the bush long term and doing work alongside



National Geographic, I received a chocolate cake and wisdom on how to survive as we headed into camp. It was a birthday to remember! I spent a week travelling to rural villages on the most treacherous roads I have ever witnessed. I took notes on the stories that the film team captured so that we could write blogs, appeals, and email upon our return to South Africa.

This trip was incredibly challenging physically,

mentally, and emotionally. We slept in tents amongst the local village with little access to communicate with the world outside of us. If we were not intentionally seeking these people, you would never know that these communities exist from civilization.

Angola stretched me in ways I didn't know possible. I experienced joy, heartbreak, challenges, and victories all at once. My eyes were opened to the scale of operations that Joint Aid Management has implemented globally. I was impressed by the logistics and framework behind developing the JAM porridge that the children are fed, to how the food is delivered to rural villages that don't even have proper roads. It is rigorous and exhausting work that this team executes to ensure that your support gives these children food and education. I can attest to the fact that the support you give to JAM is not just giving a child a meal, but also completely changing a child's life.

While camping in villages where JAM feeds and drills water wells, I witnessed joyful spirits, hopeful smiles, and children singing songs. These were ecstatic days. I

could truly grasp the impact that my friends and I have made through fundraising and having this firsthand understanding.

Midweek, we visited a malnutrition clinic in Catumbela. I still struggle to find the words to express this experience. I recall the film crew trying to capture my emotions and ask me what I thought as we walked outside of the clinic, but I was speechless. I have never seen such frail bodies in my life. There was a child just 2 months old in the emergency room that had been there one month. For half of this child's life, he lived in a malnutrition clinic. My heart remains broken.

Upon returning to South Africa, I found myself very passionate about the power of Marketing and storytelling. I took my internship very seriously as I saw my position as Social Media Manager as a tool to retain and gain funders.

Npengage.com shares, "online fundraising accounts for seven-percent of total fundraising and has seen double-digit growth over the past four years. Online fundraising has also proven to be an extremely effective donors acquisition vehicle." This evidence encourages me to take my position as a high honor and privilege that can truly leverage the global success of JAM.

Living on Base: [Watch Here](#)

As my passion for digital communications grew, I also saw the value of it while living on JAM's base as I had limited communication with the world outside JAM's walls. The best way for me to connect with my family, friends, and stay updated on South African news was through digital communications.

The base is in a very remote community outside of Johannesburg. It's about 20 minutes drive to any shopping centers and not safe to walk outside of the tall brick walls and fencing, as one of South Africa's leading communities in rape crimes lies wall to wall with JAM's main gates.

The base consists of 3 HQ offices: JAM International, JAM South Africa, and JAM Water. There is also a studio for the video production team attached to a cafe that visitors, mission teams, etc. use for community events when they are stay on base.



My neighbours on one side were a young couple. The wife was unemployed and the husband was a field monitor for JAM South Africa programs. Field Monitors play a key role in establishing the relationships between the township communities and JAM's corporate offices. Often, these monitors grew up or live in the townships still, but JAM employs them to be community leaders and check in on the school's needs.

My neighbour on the other side was a young, Zimbabwean husband whose wife and family were still in Zimbabwe as he balanced his work and studies on the Accounting team at JAM.

I was immersed in various African cultures and did not encounter one other American living on base my entire stay. This truly allowed me to become a part of the culture and open my mind and heart up to the ways of the multiple cultures that surrounded me.

One of my dearest connections was an Indian couple from Durban, South Africa. They prepared the most wonderful Durban inspired dishes for me and treated me as if I was one of their own children. I even spent a long holiday weekend with them on a roadtrip down to Durban to meet their family and see where they grew up.

The highlight of my experience living on base were the children of families who worked for JAM. It was interesting to see so many diverse children grow up and play together in such a unique setting. The children would wait for me on my stoop until I got off of work. They called themselves, "The Stoop Kids."



A particular child and I became incredibly close friends. His name was Alulutu and he was 5 years old. He lived 2 doors down from me with his mother who worked full time and was finishing a college degree and his father was a driver for JAM. Alulutu moved to JAM base when his father was hired just 3 months before I moved on base. He did not speak English as well as the other children and he was the youngest. I remember one particular day early in my visit when he was not invited to a birthday party all of the other children on base were because they simply could not interact with him. That day, Alulutu had wandered to my apartment and knocked on my door. I was working on creative content for my Lumos blog and asked him and his parents if they would allow me to interview him. They kindly accepted and the beginning of a miraculous story unfolded.

Alu loved to see himself on the camera and experienced so much joy after watching the final product. He began to knock on my door everyday after returning from work to make more videos together.

We created, "Alu Listening to a Record", "Alu and Morgan Go For A Walk" and "Interview with Alulutu." Eventually, these videos led to improvement in his socialization and ability to communicate with the other children. On my last day at



JAM, I had to explain to Alulutu where I was going and why I had to go. It was the most heartbreaking moment of both of our lives. However, it resulted in a beautiful video that truly displayed the depth of our love and friendship. Alulutu was my source of joy. If I ever missed my family or did not understand what God was doing in my life he told me to pray. He was the angel that God gave me on this journey.

(See video: [Here](#))

Mozambique: [Watch Here](#)

In August, I had the privilege of traveling to Mozambique for the Annual Global Affiliate meetings. Due to unforeseen circumstances the 2 other members of the marketing team were unable to attend. This situation left me responsible to take all of the marketing materials to Mozambique from South Africa. This had to be one of the most exhilarating travel days of my life! I recall not sleeping much the night before as I was so thrilled to meet JAM's leaders from various nations.

After getting off at a connecting airport that looked like a homemade ice cream stand with no sign of life, I quickly realized, I was not supposed to get off of the plane. Luckily, a young Afrikaans child identified that I was taking the same route as him and let the airline know that I needed to get back on the plane to continue the trek. Every little footstep I took was ordained by the Lord. He made sure that I was protect in all circumstances.

Once I arrived to the JAM PLC Farm, I climbed up into a baobab tree to watch the sunset. I listened to an audio file on my phone from 9 months prior. I received a prophetic word in Nashville that word for word said, " I see you resting against a tree and the Lord saying yes to all your dreams and visions." In that moment, I had so much peace and trust that I will carry for the rest of my life.

As the affiliate offices began to arrive the next morning, I saw the heartbeat of JAM in multiple people and places. It was incredible to see the scalability of JAM's work globally and learn to understand the cultural perspectives of each office.

I have grown so much in learning how to have patience and understanding with other cultures as some business concepts or social media strategies may work in one nation, they may not in another. I have learned that it is not, " the wrong side of the road" but, "the other one."

Closing Thoughts: [Recap Video](#)

I can and will forever speak of and cherish my 6 months in South Africa. I had many take-aways and lessons learned, some that may not even come to fruition until later in life. What I do know is that this experience changed my life, my perspective, my vision, and my future. I am forever grateful for the Lumos Foundation, JAM International, and Belmont University for being my dream makers.