I was struck by this, for I come from an area where kids my age fight for spots in different volunteering organisations. Granted their motives are probably not completely altruistic, but nonetheless, American kids are told from a young age that it is important to give back to the community.

My observations have led me to conclude that the people of Bangladesh are remarkably kind, hospitable, dedicated and patriotic. I believe they are completely capable of truly improving their nation's condition. However, most Bangladeshis are routinely exposed to so much suffering that the marked difference between the haves and the have-nots become a prosaic fact of life. Perhaps if Bangladeshi schools at large incorporated community service into their curriculum, the children would understand from an early age that the worst of conditions can always be improved, and that it is the duty of the fortunate to always help those in need.

I realise now how hard CRP must work to attract donors, volunteers, and staff from Bangladesh, let alone keep them. For example, CRP has cooperated with Dhaka University and Queens University, Kingston, Ontario and the University of York St. John in the UK to introduce a masters course in Rehabilitation Science to be offered at CRP. This is meant to give incentive to therapists not to leave CRP immediately after interning there. For no matter the crucial role foreign volunteers have always played in supplying CRP with free service and updated techniques, no matter the international scope they have created within the organisation, CRP is primarily a national facility that depends on national support.

"We must struggle with the fact that therapists here often call themselves doctors," says Valerie Taylor. "Only if they stop doing that people will learn the distinction between therapists and doctors. If therapy could maybe be explained in the health sections of some newspapers, people would better understand." Truthfully, CRP is the only organisation in all of Bangladesh that dedicates itself to therapy at such a scale.

Nonetheless, Taylor remains hopeful. "It takes a certain type of person to do the jobs people are doing here. I truly believe the nurses dressing the sores, the ward assistants and cleaners, are really special people," she says. Perhaps if there is even a small number of these "special people" in a nation, if there are people even besides Taylor, such as the head of CRP's metal workshop, that have dedicated themselves to this organisation for its entire 30 years of operation, the potential for such service exists in Bangladesh's general population. Perhaps now all that potential hangs on is spreading the word of CRP and other similar organisations in Bangladesh. On the day I first spoke to Valerie Taylor she was off to a round table meeting to discuss the activities of CRP in Dhaka with Protom Alo, a national newspaper with a large circulation.

While I was at CRP I was introduced to a man who, like my parents, emigrated to America and raised his family there. However, he had come back to host a volunteer workshop in Sylhet, Bangladesh. He has been going to various organisations to recruit attendees, and though I could not go, I found it interesting that such consciousness was being developed in other parts of the country.

Such consciousness is one thing my time at CRP has immutably impressed within me. Before I came to work there, before I came to Bangladesh at all this year, I was painfully aware of a lack of true understanding on my part of humanitarian aid. All my life I have been privileged and surrounded by other privileged people. I have been incredibly lucky, and I have always known it, but I have never truly felt it.

This summer, I felt it when I saw the man lying on the ground with sores glaring red against his dark skin. I felt it when I hugged the special needs children who use special mobility aids. I felt it when I talked about cartoons with a boy of my little brother's age who is now in a wheelchair because a wall toppled down on him. Now I cannot forget it.

If I have ever felt duty bound to help Bangladesh, I feel much more so now. What was once an abstraction in my mind has been made concrete, bolstered by images that refuse to stop swimming before my eyes.

I must thank CRP immensely for giving me the opportunity to learn and see as much as I did in those weeks. I have grown so much, and I wonder what it will feel like when I go back home to Marietta, GA and slip back into my comfortable routine. I do hope that I will be able to spread word of CRP and its message to my friends and teachers, to impress them in some way the awareness I have newly gained. Now that I have an idea how an NGO can rise from the muddiest of grounds, how it can help in the most numerous and empowering of ways despite the many obstacles erected before it, and how everyone is capable of alleviating a fraction of the suffering in this world, I wish to foster in the heart of my community a rich, genuine "culture of service," just as CRP has so successfully done. All the patients, staff, and volunteers I had the priceless chance to talk to, all the children I had the chance to smile at during my time at CRP, will hopefully stand witness to the blossoming of my words into actions.