

# THE SERVICE LINE

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It is with mixed emotions that I write you this letter. As some of you may already know, my mother in law, Margaret George, 95, passed away after a 14 day struggle in the hospital. On one hand we all have a heavy heart as we miss her already, on the other hand we are happy that she suffered only briefly and that she has joined her husband Jack and the Lord. In reality Maggie had two tough weeks and 95 years of a great life (we should all be so lucky). Jerry and I are grateful that our boys had the opportunity to really get to know their grandmother in the 10 years she lived with us. Their lives will forever be enriched. For me personally, I learned about grace, patience and gentleness – all qualities that I could use more of. Thank you for your kind words, thoughts and prayers – we appreciate them all. As far as the Spartans, we now have another angel cheering for the Green and White from above!



*Margaret Louise George  
(1922-2017)*

Spartans Forever,

2017 VOLLEYBALL TEAM  
camp counselors

**JULY 10 // SKILLS DAY CAMP**

**JULY 11 // SKILLS DAY CAMP**

**JULY 12 // POSITION DAY CAMP**

**JULY 13 // MIDDLE SCHOOL CAMP**

**JULY 15 // COLLEGE PREP CAMP**

**JULY 17-19 // COMPETITIVE TEAM CAMP**

**JULY 20-22 // ALL SKILLS OVERNIGHT CAMP**

\*For more information or to register visit [sportcamps.msu.edu](http://sportcamps.msu.edu)



# The Trip of a Lifetime—a Tour of Italy!

## *The Holy Roman City (May 25-27)*

The Spartans departed Detroit and flew overnight to Rome. Upon landing and clearing customs, the adventure began immediately - the bus was off to the Coliseum. We met our tour leaders Leo and Carmen at the airport, and once we arrived in town the party was introduced to Stewart Harvey, a professional group guide, who led us through the remains of both the Coliseum and the Forum. Stewart was a brilliant storyteller who was both knowledgeable and entertaining, and gave us a great overview of the history and points of interest in both venues.

Having flown overnight and toured all day, the arrival at our hotel in the late afternoon was a welcome sight! The Spartans were happy to check in and shower, taking a small break before a welcome dinner at Il Giardino d'Albino in Rome. A five-course meal was on the docket, with entertainment and a top-notch staff bringing platter after platter of delicious Italian meats and cheeses, pastas, and desserts that were out of this world. Tired and full, the Spartans made their way back to the hotel for some much-needed rest.

On Saturday, the Spartans were up bright and early for breakfast on the rooftop terrace prior to a departure for a 9:30 match vs. Pala VolleyRo, a high-level club team. MSU lost the first two sets by 25-20 scores, rallied to win the third set 25-23, but fell in an exciting fourth set, with the Italians finally getting the best of MSU 27-25. Holly Toliver led MSU with 13 kills on the day, while Alyssa Garvelink had six kills and seven blocks.

After a pit stop at the hotel, the team prepared for a walking tour of the Vatican Museum, Sistine Chapel, and St. Peter's Basilica. Our new friend Stewart was again on hand to prepare us for what we would see when we entered the Sistine Chapel, and we worked our way through parts of the Vatican Museum before entering the Chapel. The entire travel party was mesmerized by the rich history and the breathtaking scenes before us - the works of Michelangelo, the intricate tapestries, the incredibly detailed marble sculptures and the overall aura of what was unfolding as we walked through the hallways. The Sistine Chapel was a bucket-list item for many on the trip - and whether the religious symbolism, the intricate art, or the historical significance, everyone came away with lifelong memories. A tour of St. Peter's Basilica and seeing where Pope Francis has his weekly audience - the vast seating area where Pilgrims come to hear him address the crowd - was another breathtaking sight. Many in the travel party purchased rosaries that were then blessed by the Cardinals in the Holy City.

A walk over to Trevi Fountain was a highlight (the gelato break also provided a lift), as the team participated in the tradition of tossing coins from their right hand over their left shoulder, twice - once for a wish to return to Rome, the second coin a personal wish. The team then traveled over to the Spanish Steps (a steep climb after the day's touring) and back to the hotel neighborhood, where a team dinner was the final event of the evening before retiring for the night.

Sunday morning, the team ate their final breakfast in Rome and bid farewell to the city.





# The Trip of a Lifetime—a Tour of Italy!

## *Milan, Lake Como & Moltrasio (May 28-29)*



The Spartans took a train from Rome to Milan for the second leg of their trip, and immediately traveled to the next game venue - the home training center of the Italian National Team. MSU quickly shook off its bus legs to prepare for what they knew was a challenging match against the Junior National Team. The Spartans lost the first set 25-16, but over the course of the set, the Spartans were making good adjustments to try to get back into the match. The Spartans took the next set 25-20, and the teams then engaged in two more sets of tight, exciting volleyball action that was highly entertaining. MSU took the third set 26-24, and the fourth by a 27-25 margin. MSU was led by freshman Meredith Norris, who had 11 kills in the match, and both Brooke Kranda and Alyssa Garvelink had 10. Garvelink also added six blocks, and Abby Monson wore the libero jersey for three of the four sets and totaled 19 digs.

After a post-game pizza snack (yep, we're enjoying those a BUNCH), we departed the training center for our hotel on Lake Como in the small town of Moltrasio. The Hotel Imperiale was our home base for the next two days - and the ride up into the mountains provided our first views of the breathtaking scenery we were about to enjoy.

What Rome offered us in history and art, Lake Como provided us in the natural beauty of the landscape. Lush greenery, gorgeous florals, a view of the Alps, the reflections off the lake - the players doubled down on their photo-taking in trying to capture the beauty of the region. A fantastic team dinner on the lake capped what had been a long day of travel and highly-competitive volleyball.

Monday morning, the Spartan entourage gathered early for a two-hour boat trip to Bellagio for some free time. It was hard to believe that the boat ride itself wasn't the main attraction - seeing the gorgeous villas lining not only the shoreline as well as visible up into the hills above as the ferry navigated its way to Bellagio. Once docking in Bellagio, the team had some free time to explore and shop the local merchants- many purchased some trinkets, and many more were shopping for friends and family.

The team gathered in an outdoor trattoria for their pre-game meal before departing Bellagio, and took a quick water ferry across the lake to load the bus for the hour trip back to Milan for the second game vs. the Italian Junior National Team. This version had a different look than the game on Sunday, as several players had returned to their clubs for games during the week. However, there were still many familiar faces with big arms on the other side of the net when the teams took to the floor for warmups, and the Italians also saw different looks out of the Spartans, who utilized all but one player in the match. The second match went to the Italian squad, 3-0.

A farewell dinner at the Training Center was enjoyed by the travel party, and then the team boarded the bus on to their next adventure ... while participating in a spirited karaoke session on board.





# The Trip of a Lifetime—a Tour of Italy!

## *Trieste—A City By The Sea (May 31-June 1)*

The long travel day on Wednesday paid off with an amazing two days in Trieste (with side trips to Slovenia)! A port town with amazing water views on the Adriatic Sea, but a thriving city with restaurants, shopping, and more just steps from the Adriatic. Wednesday morning began with a walking tour of some of the historic sites in the area, and followed up with a trip to the Grotto Gigante, the second-largest tourist cave in the world. The rock formations were amazing to look at - but unlike the historical landmarks we had seen in previous days, this was an interesting departure.

After a pre-game meal, we headed across the border to Slovenia to take on the Slovenian National Team in our fourth and final match of the trip. The training center was in Koper, just over the border from Trieste, and the first excitement came when we were able to stream the match for our friends and families back home! The Spartans swept the match 3-0, and the teams played a fourth set as well (which went to MSU). Brooke Kranda and Alyssa Garvelink each had 10 kills, with Garvelink also contributing four blocks. Sophomore Samantha McLean had 19 digs over the four sets. On Friday, the Spartans had a late morning after some position meetings, and mid-morning headed back over the border to Portoroz, Slovenia for some beach time. Despite the jelly-fish lining the coast, the team went to "Plan B" and went out to one of the piers for some swimming in deeper water. Some rented canoes and ventured out as well.

After some lunch, the team went out on a walking tour of nearby Piran - the winding, climbing streets took us to the crest at St. George's Church - not only did it provide an amazing view of the port city, but we were also able to see three other different countries from that vantage point - Austria, Italy, and Croatia. Our guide, Damer, shared not only historical landmarks, but also helped us understand the transition the country has undergone over the last 25 years since its break from Yugoslavia.

A small break before dinner allowed everyone a time to freshen up, and small groups broke off to engage in some team bonding exercises over a meal at a restaurant of their choice.



## *Venice—The Canaled City (June 2)*

The final day seemed upon us in a blink - the bus loaded and headed back south to Venice for the finale of the trip. Arriving late morning, the team grabbed some lunch and prepared for our final tour of the streets and canals of Venice. Our guide, Corine, led us through that tour, which ended in the superb views of St. Mark's Square. Some free time led to shopping and gondola rides, and the team gathered together again in the late afternoon to take the water taxi to the hotel.

One final farewell dinner was on the docket, and the setting could not be more stunning. Tables at the outdoor restaurant along the canal was the perfect backdrop for photos and spirited conversations as the travel party recapped their favorite parts of the trip. We also celebrated Autumn Bailey's birthday - what a way to celebrate!

