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IF IT'S TUESDAY, THIS MUST BE TURKEY

What happens when one family gets inspired—really, really inspired—by our Dream List? The answer: a year like no other

Three Decembers ago, a Dallas mom of four named Sue Sandford opened up her *Condé Nast Traveler* and read an article by Editor in Chief Klara Glowczewska that changed her—and her kids'—lives forever.

The piece detailed Glowczewska's once-in-a-lifetime, ten-minute, \$4,250 venture into Egypt's Nefertari Tomb, normally closed to the public but opened to her and her family thanks to the contacts and pull of travel specialist Jim Berkeley of Destinations & Adventures International in Beverly Hills, California. Sandford found herself bewitched. One day, she vowed to her children, they'd visit Nefertari themselves.

But Glowczewska's trip got Sandford thinking about travel in general—its purpose, its possibilities, its potential to teach like no school ever could. "I wanted the kids to step through the looking glass to see history firsthand," Sandford says, "all while realizing how much is beyond our borders." And so, two years later—with dreams of Egypt still in her head—the single mom devised a yearlong

journey that would introduce her clan [from left, Josh, 10; Becca, 13; Emma, 8; Sue; and McKenna, 14] to arts and languages around the globe

while affording them a perspective hard to find in a classroom. She dubbed her project World School, its motto "You can't have a narrow mind and a thick passport."

From there, things moved fast. Sandford notified her children's schools that they'd be missing the 2009–2010 academic year, found online classes, and commissioned Jim Berkeley to devise the family's trip. After whittling the Sandfords' 50-country wish list down to a more realistic 34, he concocted activities to suit their unusual needs. "It wasn't just about seeing the Sphinx or the Taj Mahal," Berkeley says. "Sue wanted the kids to understand the challenges of other children around the world." Sandford insisted that they visit a school or orphanage at every destination, and that typical tourist activities (shopping, lounging) would come second to meeting with locals. In November, three months after they departed Tex-



as, they dined with Palestinian refugees in Jordan, and this month they followed a former political prisoner around South Africa's Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was detained.

When the Sandfords set off on July 31, each hefted a 25-pound backpack filled with little more than five outfits, three pairs of underwear, and two pairs of shoes. They've already had enough spectacular experiences to last several lifetimes: In August, they descended to an obscure Moscow lair to sit in Stalin's war bunker, and Emma took private lessons from Bolshoi ballerinas. September was

spent in Tuscany, where the brood learned to cook and traveled to San Gimignano to meet champion gelato maker Sergio Dondoli. Later, Milan fashion week welcomed clotheshorse Becca into its elegant fold: Guided by *Condé Nast Traveler* Style Director Mark Connolly, she studied Armani's, Gucci's, and Sergio Rossi's spring 2010 collections and became a paparazzi darling for a day (see "Behind the Scenes," page 14, for the backstory and truth.travel for video of Becca's fashionista transformation).

Halfway through their journey (they'll return home to Dallas on July

31, 2010), Sandford has noted dozens of changes, large and small: Becca has shot up two inches, Josh has outgrown his shoes, and all have pledged to pick up a new language. "They've decided for themselves that they have a lot to learn," Sandford says, "but they're ruined for life in the blind faith department—nothing will ever go unquestioned again. Lucky me!"

In our September 2010 issue, we'll pull back the curtain on the Sandfords' amazing adventure. For on-the-road updates from the clan in the meantime, visit ourworldschool.com.

—Eimear Lynch

