Today was our class’s third day going to DCCK and we arrived thinking that we pretty much knew the kitchen protocol. However, we soon found out that the weekend crew was pretty relaxed about the rules and that the weekday staff ran a much tighter ship. This entailed all the girls wearing hairnets, as well as a rapid kitchen pace with the staff being much more serious than the weekend crew. The weekday crew also serves as a culinary arts training program and there were many trainees in the kitchen learning from the experienced chefs. I spent my entire four hours washing dishes, a task I was poorly suited too. I am not a very neat person, who should probably not be combined with a high pressure spray nozzle. Needless to say, water ended up all over me, with my shoes and socks becoming completely soaked. On the bright side, there usually was a visible end to the dishes I had to wash – until the next batch arrived. John supervised my dishwashing and made sure that I was keeping up with the heavy workload. “You’re taking too long, here let me show you again,” was an oft heard phrase during my day in the kitchen. I improved significantly as the morning progressed; perhaps I was regaining the skills that I learned during my two days employed as a restaurant dishwasher. I cleaned all the dishes that others in the class soiled, and I managed to keep up with the pace. My classmates busily worked chopping various vegetables in preparation for the day’s meals. I was the last one working as I was still struggling to get the last of the dishes cleaned. On weekdays DCCK outputs around 7500 meals to a variety of programs throughout the community. Working at DCCK has really dispelled my preconceived notions of the food produced by these organizations, as I have learned how professionally prepared and ordinary the meals are. There were no foul pots of witches brew or moldy meatloaf. DCCK’s philosophy is to not serve food that they would not consume themselves. This was a point that I found extremely valid, those in need are not animals or sub-human, so why would anyone place food in front of them that they would not even serve to their dogs. Yesterday I was angered when a volunteer implied that the food only appeared edible to those who were starving. I thought that it was really nice to see all the trainees in the kitchen, working toward a better life, alongside the volunteers. After lunch, we talked to Caroline who shared her story about overcoming addiction and rebuilding a clean and productive life. Once addicted to crack, she had entered the culinary arts training program several years before and eventually became in charge of the volunteer aspect of the organization. I was really uplifted by her story, and I realized how unlikely it would have been for her to raise herself above addiction, and the fact that she beat the odds is truly amazing. Sadly, walking the streets back from DCCK will remind one of those that never made it out of that vicious cycle. DCCK was truly impressive to me; It is non-profit that is run like a corporation and has truly amazing results. There is no waiting for supplies at the kitchen, as it is fully stocked and supplied. They have developed revenue sources such as schools and a catering business, which combined with donations means that they prosper without significant government funding. Overall this trip has been an immense learning experience for me, and I have gained significant perspective from DCCK as well as the speakers that have spoken to our class during the trip. I am thankful for having chosen this class as it has opened up my eyes even wider than they were before, exposing me to ideas that have expanded my philosophy on life.