

Adysan Kern - Contestant #4

How a 4-Year-Old Changed My Perspective on Life

One of my favorite aspects of being a member of the youth group at my church is going on mission trips. I absolutely love to travel and being able to be a part of a group that loves to help not only their own community but other struggling communities as well. Last summer I went on a mission trip to Brownsville, Texas with this amazing group of people. We chose Brownsville because it is right near the border of Mexico, which is where a lot of financially struggling immigrants are. During our time in Brownsville, we repaired a women's house who had recently lost her son and hosted a Vacation Bible School. I had the privilege of working with the children at the Vacation Bible School and doing various activities and games with them. There was one girl in particular who caught my attention. Her name was Rebecca and she was only four years old. Throughout the week I became her "buddy" and she told me about her life since she was one of the few children who spoke English. A single mom was raising her, and her grandma watched her while her mom was at work. She was the youngest child with an older sister and brother. She said she didn't get much attention at home and was so appreciative that we came. During the week we painted each other's nails, learned how to play soccer, spent a lot of time swinging at the playground, explained to her what snow is, and we danced and sang children's worship songs while learning the stories of the Bible. On the first day, she grabbed my wrist and asked what was on it, and I realized that she had never seen an Apple Watch before, which is a common item back in Waynesburg, PA. When I walked her home one day I saw that her family lived in a tiny trailer that almost looked unlivable for a family of four. All of their toys were outside because there was no room for them in the house. This was an eye-opening experience for me to see that some people live their lives like this. On the last day of Vacation Bible School, she begged me to stay in Texas with her and didn't understand why we had to leave. While saying goodbye, I was almost in tears because Rebecca had taught me so much. She made me realize I have to be appreciative of everything I have. Even though she came from rough home life, she always had a smile on her face. Rebecca taught me to never judge someone based on their wealth, and that happiness can help you persevere through any tough situation. I hope I influenced Rebecca's life as much as she did to me, and that someday I can see her again.