

Emma Wheeler

Good morning. My name is Emma Wheeler and I was one of the many youth to participate in Breakaway, a spring break mission trip here in Fresno. This mission trip really changed me and brought me closer to God.

In the morning we did a vacation bible school with the kids at Whispering Woods, the apartment complex just down the street, and in the afternoon we did a sports camp where the kids could play with the balls and make bracelets if they wanted to. One of the afternoons, a little girl came up to me and needed help with her bracelet. I had just learned earlier that day how to make the bracelets and wasn't very good at it, but did my best to teach her. While trying to teach her, I realized she didn't speak English very well and she was being held from kindergarten because she wasn't at the correct level for any of her subjects. She learned how to make a four by making the bracelet, and learned about half her alphabet while I sat with the bracelet taped to my leg for her to work on. I didn't think at the time I was doing very much until I realized that God had put me there for a reason.

Every night we would be back at People's Church for worship and to listen to the speaker for the week, John Alvarado. On the last morning, the speaker told us a story about a game he used to play with his brother and one of his friends. They would go to the train tracks, jump on the train, ride it until they could see a certain bend coming, and jump off. His brother couldn't jump off, and wound up missing the opportunity to jump and wound up having to jump off at a particularly bad location. He made an analogy to this with our own lives. God can give us an opportunity, but sometimes we can completely miss it. The speaker challenged us to go with what God tells us to, and that if we wanted to make a change in our lives right then, that we should do so. If we really wanted to make that change, however small or large, we were supposed to stand up. I decided I wanted to make some changes in my relationships with some of my friends and my family, and was one of the people to stand up. By doing this, I was sure of the reason why God had me spend my spring break not sleeping in like the rest of my friends at school – especially not with waking up at 5:30am to help with the food

pantry that turned out to be an amazing experience for me – but helping other people and realizing what He wants me to do. Thank you.