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I have moved around a lot with my family. None of that was ever planned. Every day I ask myself, "What does the Lord want me to do today?" and then I try to listen and do what God wants of me.

Read Ruben Perez-Schulz's story
When the refugee crisis started, I ignored the media. Finally, I made myself read the articles that talked about the reasons the refugees were desperate enough to leave everything they had known. The articles about how they travel hundreds of miles to get on a boat and attempt to make it to a shore called Lesbos. The articles that showed a 3-year-old Syrian boy who drowned trying to make it. I knew God was pressing on my heart: I had to go and I had to find a way to help.

Read Teela Ruehle's story

STORIES
Michigan is home for me. That’s why Andrews University was a natural choice for me when I graduated from academy and decided to study business management and information systems.

I had one goal in mind when I stepped on to this campus: Stay focused, graduate, and then work my way up in a company until I was making the big bucks and living the American Dream!

There were moments during my freshman and sophomore years that I wondered if the goals I had and the route I was taking were truly what life was about; however, I quickly brushed those thoughts aside since most people in society were telling me that money is the key to happiness.

Things began to change when I started working as a residence advisor in the residence hall and started to connect with people from different cultures and lifestyles than me. I started to realize that pain is universal, and that maybe there was more to life that my own happiness. Instead, could the goal be to make someone else’s life better? God had begun to work on my heart and was showing me piece by piece that there is more to life than what society offers.

Over the next four years, my goals changed, my major changed, mission trips happened and God’s peace became my goal and reality. I realized we only get one chance at this life, and I don’t want to spend mine chasing manmade dollar bills; I want to make an impact on the world.

A passion for caring for people, talking with people and working in crisis situations had developed in me. This has come in handy for my current position as a women’s dean, but probably the deepest passion God has placed in me is for mission trips and relief aid.
When the refugee crisis started, I ignored the media. I didn’t want to hear about more pain in the world. It seemed that around every corner the world was in great need. Finally, I made myself read the articles that talked about the reasons the refugees were desperate enough to leave everything they had known. The articles about how they travel hundreds of miles to get on a boat and attempt to make it to a shore called Lesbos. The articles that showed a 3-year-old Syrian boy who drowned trying to make it. I knew God was pressing on my heart: I had to go and I had to find a way to help.

Many people ask me why I went to Greece, and what good I was able to do. The truth is I don’t know. But with the words from the children’s book, “The Starfish Story,” echoing in my mind, how could I not go?

An old man had a habit of early morning walks on the beach. One day, after a storm, he saw a human figure in the distance moving like a dancer. As he came closer he saw that it was a young woman and she was not dancing, but was reaching down to the sand, picking up a starfish and very gently throwing them into the ocean.

“Young lady,” he asked, “Why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?”

“The sun is up, and the tide is going out, and if I do not throw them in they will die.”

“But young lady, do you not realize that there are miles and miles of beach and starfish all along it? You cannot possibly make a difference.”

The young woman listened politely, paused and then bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it into the sea, past the breaking waves, saying, “It made a difference for that one.”

The old man looked at the young woman inquisitively and thought about what she had done. Inspired, he joined her in throwing starfish back into the sea.

“And the king will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me’” (Matthew 25:40).