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## Fixing Your Eyes

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## Fixing Your Eyes

*“Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you” (Proverbs 4:25 NLT).*

BY ASHLEIGH JARDINE

It was the end of her freshman year at Andrews University that Korissa Mattson says she started to feel unsatisfied with life. “I felt too focused on myself and worried about superficial things. I decided it would help to do something for someone else.”

Like many other students who “know the feeling,” Korissa tried to refocus her attention on God and others by going on a short-term mission trip in summer 2007. She’d been several times in the past and enjoyed mission trips, always returning home with redirected thoughts and a fire burning inside for Christ. But this time, God had a different story for Korissa to tell—a story she wouldn’t have picked for herself, until now.



*Korissa Mattson (right) says her missionary experience was the hardest but most rewarding year of her life. “I do not regret going, and I encourage everyone to keep the door open—and if God calls you, go!”*

After talking with her mom, Korissa contacted Japhet De Oliveira, chaplain for Missions at Andrews University. There were no short-term mission trips during the summer, he told her, *but* there were lots of opportunities to go overseas as a teacher during the school year.

Though hesitant at first, Korissa decided to travel to Majuro, Marshall Islands, to teach second grade for the 2007–2008 school year. The experience was not what she expected.

“Before I left someone told me, ‘You’re not going to grow and change until you’ve been completely broken.’ I thought I had been broken before,” Korissa says, “but what I experienced there was more brokenness than I had ever felt in my life.”

Korissa had 32 students with no help, and felt abandoned by God, alone, confused, tired and lost.

In December, she came home for Christmas and did not

want to return to the islands. “My students are what really kept me going, though,” Korissa says. “I promised them that I would be their teacher for a year and that’s when I remembered that I wasn’t there for myself, but because God had called me.”

Korissa claimed Proverbs 4:25, and fixed her eyes on what lay before to make it to the end. She learned to rely on God and not on herself or friends by letting go

and allowing God to take control. When Korissa returned home at the end of the school year, she noticed even bigger changes in herself.

“I was more confident with who I was and more confident in God,” she says. “The experience was like a Refiner’s fire. If I hadn’t gone through that experience, who would I be today?”

Because of the missionary experience, Korissa decided to change her major to social work, and hopes to help kids who are troubled or were abused in the past.

Her missionary experience, Korissa says, “was the hardest but most rewarding year of my life. I do not regret going, and I encourage everyone to keep the door open—and if God calls you, go!”

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Ashleigh Jardine is a student news writer at the Office of Integrated Marketing & Communication at Andrews University. Korissa Mattson lives in Watervliet, Michigan. She is a junior at Andrews University and works as a student mission coordinator.