

## **This I Believe**

In 2012 I went on my first mission trip to Black Mesa, Arizona. Life on the Navajo reservation was a lot different than what I expected it to be; it was like being in a completely different country. The people we met there were extremely friendly and accepting. A man named JR was the first to greet my team when we arrived. He took us all into the House of Joy, where we sat and participated in their church service. In that very moment was when my outlook on life truly started to change. Nothing they do is about time or perfection; they do not have standards that they have to live up to.

Spending that week with JR and other members of the congregation was extremely eye-opening for me. Every morning we would wake up and ask JR what the plan was for the day, and he never had anything planned out past breakfast. At first, that was very aggravating to me. I wanted to know what we were going to be doing and what I could expect the day to look like. After the first couple days though, I started to realize that we did not need a schedule. I slowly allowed myself to let go of time and the thought that there were things we had to get done. Yes, we were there to help rebuild, but I think we were also there to learn from the people we were working with. After letting go, I felt myself at ease. I was not as tense, and I was much more happy and able to just go with whatever JR said was next.

The first night we were there, it snowed. We could not get off the plateau we were on, and that meant we could not get to our work sites. I was very frustrated at first that we could not do what we came to do. We then spent the next couple of days shoveling snow from around the food tent and making paths to get around. I did not realize it at the time, but that was a big project, and I know JR was extremely grateful that we did it, even though it was not what we came there to do.

**I believe that life is not ruled by time.** I always thought it was; in high school, bells told me when to leave class, when to eat, and when to go home. JR taught me that life is a lot simpler than that. Time is a stress in my life; I never feel as if I have enough time to get everything done that needs to get done and I get very anxious, sometimes even sick. I just have to remember JR and the other people that we worked with, and I feel a lot more in control. Time does not have control over me, and I don't have to squeeze all of my work into one afternoon. I have all the time in the world to do not only what needs to be done, but also what I want to get done, and that is what I believe.