

Lena Reineking | The Other Way Ministries

This summer, I had the honor of serving at The Other Way Ministries, a Christ-centered community development organization located on the west side of Grand Rapids. Although The Other Way offers many different community resources, I spent my summer in their summer childcare program.

Although working with kids daily is exhausting, it's also extremely rewarding. I was nervous walking in on my first day; everything was new and unknown, but everyone immediately made me feel accepted and welcome. One of my favorite memories was our field trip to the Air Zoo in Kalamazoo. This was one of the kids' favorite activities too, they got to ride the indoor rides and see full-size models of old planes. It was fun to see the kids having such a good time learning and exploring.

A few people that I met stood out to me during my time this summer. One was a girl in the summer program who I became very close to. She was about seven years old and was one of the sweetest kids I've ever met. On the first day I was at The Other Way, she told me I looked like her sister, she then told me how much she loves her sister but never gets to see her anymore since she's so much older. I could tell that she looked up to me and trusted me. I am so incredibly grateful that I got to be there for her and was someone she could talk to.

Doing this summer internship has been one of the most world-expanding experiences that I've participated in. You can't fully grasp how narrow your worldview is until you involve yourself in another community. If I had not done this internship, then I would have never gained the perspective I have now. The people I met all had different life stories and different backgrounds. Although I didn't get to meet everyone or hear everyone's story, the ones I did will forever remain a part of my memory, and I will strive to forever see the world through this newfound perspective.

Throughout this summer, we were assigned to read the book *Tattoos on the Heart* by Gregory Boyle. The memoir was like nothing I've ever read. It gave me a glimpse into a world I've never seen before. If not for this assignment, I would have never thought to pick up this book, but I'm very grateful that I did. Reading about Gregory's life made me lose some of my preconceived biases and made me reflect more deeply about the impact Christianity has on people's lives.