

# STCHM: Oceans in South Texas

August 28, 2015

A lot of really great people in my life encouraged me to serve with Go Now Missions this summer. My Baptist Student Ministry directors, my friends, pastors and loved ones encouraged me to take a step of obedience and to go wherever I was called—to leave my “yes” on the table for God, no matter what.



Katie Burkhead Eventually, I realized I could not change and grow spiritually if I stayed within my comfort zone at school and at home. I began praying, asking God to have complete control over every area in my life. Looking back now, I know I didn’t quite understand what I was asking for. I found that when I let God have control of my heart and over every single area of my life, small steps of obedience lead to huge changes.

Six months ago, I sang the song “Oceans” at Go Now Discovery Weekend, and I sang it loudly, proclaiming my faith in God’s plan and begging him to take me out of my comfort zone. To me, this song says our plans for our lives are nothing compared to the intentional and fulfilling life God has called us to. Leading up to this summer, I took steps of obedience that prepared me for more and more change. I served at Beach Reach, was open to new ways of ministry, and made difficult choices concerning relationships in my life at that time. These small steps of obedience and

opening myself up to what God had in store for me helped prepare me for the continued change this summer.

### **Trust without borders**

As a summer worker at the South Texas Children's Home Ministries, I discovered my own ocean in a town of 1,700 people. In Pettus, I found myself in a place where my trust was without borders and a place deeper than my feet care to wander. While working at STCHM, I was stretched and changed in ways that I wasn't aware of until I was removed out of my ocean. Coming home from this challenging and moving experience, I felt like a fish out of water. Countless hours of swimming lessons in the pool, figuring out who hit whom, playing Phase 10, and changing diapers taught me so many lessons that had affected the very core of how I saw myself.

This summer, I experienced spiritual warfare in a new and personal way. I learned God has created so many of us to be so drastically different, but no matter our differences, we are called to love one another for we are made in the image of God. I recognized that I like to think that I am in control and that I am only fooling myself. God is the only one in control, and he cares about my heart, my obedience and my responses in life. I have rediscovered I am just as broken as the people I was trying to minister to this summer. Everyone's greatest need is Jesus, including my own.

To me, the STCHM campus is an ocean, and only God could keep my head above the water this summer. God is my one true hope, and he defines who I am. The world does not.

### **Overwhelmed**

So many times this summer, I associated myself with Peter, walking out of the boat and onto the water as Christ asked him. All of sudden, I would see the waves and then get overwhelmed with fear and a lack of belief in God's timing and control of the situation. Each time, Christ would catch my hand

and say, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” Time and time again, I would recognize Christ’s strength, his might and his power and know that he is the Son of the living God (Matthew 14:22-33).

Prayerfully singing the words to “Oceans” and following through with steps of obedience led to huge changes in my life. It is not something to be taken lightly. When you ask for big things, God will deliver. Giving God control over my life was not easy, and at times, it was and still is painful to go through. Scripture reminds me: “No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it” (Hebrews 12:11).

### **I feel different in my bones**

When we prayerfully ask during worship that God will “Take me, break me, mold me, make me into something new” or “Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders,” God will hear our prayers and deliver discipline so righteousness will be produced. I cannot put my experience of undergoing discipline and stepping out onto an ocean at STCHM fully into words. All I can say is that I feel different in my bones after God has used my time at STCHM to continue to mold me into what he has deemed best for his purpose and glory.

I never imagined my ocean being here in Texas, of all places. If you pray for big things and follow through with obedience, God will deliver. He will change you in ways you never knew were possible. You won’t be able to fully explain it, but just like I am, you’ll be waiting in anticipation to see what the next ocean will be.

*Katie Burkhead, a student at the University of Texas at Austin, served with Go Now Missions at South Texas Children’s Home Ministries.*