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BUTTERFLIES

Volunteering at the Mariposa DR Foundation had a huge impact on me. I wanted to get to know the girls, and making an effort to speak Spanish was the best way to accomplish this. I had to break out of my comfort zone and force myself to try a new language but, even though we couldn't communicate perfectly, we found so many fun ways to become closer without words. We played partner games and softball, made human chains and held scavenger hunts. The relationships that blossomed were beautiful and I now think about how hard ELL students work and what I can do to help them succeed.

GARDENS

I loved visiting Taino Farms, where we learned about permaculture and aquaponics. Our amazing guide talked about sustainability and zero waste, and ways to make a second use of things - plastic bottles become tools, old wood becomes garden beds. She explained how permaculture is about adjusting our lens to see the beauty in everything. Materials are not brand new and plants aren't arranged to look "perfect," but are planted so they work together, benefiting and protecting each other. She tied this to empowering women and how our world is working to see all women as unique and gorgeous, each in her own way as she wants to be seen, irregardless of conventional expectations of beauty. Her words gave me goosebumps!

If you want to do something, put in 100% and go for it! From now on I'm saying "yes" to things that scare me because I know I will become a better person for having pushed myself farther and taken the risk.



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