

April Stocks  
EDU 1400

## **SERVICE LEARNING REFLECTION**

To begin my reflection I want to first express that I thoroughly enjoyed this volunteering assignment. I love being able to give back to the community which is one reason I am excited to start a career in education. I spent most of my time at UAID helping out with the Christmas Box program which helps the intellectually disabled receive a Christmas that they would not normally have without the help from UAID.

While I was at UAID I worked on creating ornaments which had the client's pictures and information on them with the things that they needed and wanted for Christmas, but mostly what they needed. I also put a majority of the ornaments up for display in the Christmas Box office and also UAID's main office so that people could come in and "adopt" an ornament/client and provide for them to get the things that they need for Christmas. Other things that I did at UAID was helped with office work such as data entry and filing, organizing donations, and also got to spend some time celebrating a birthday and going away with the workers of UAID and a few of the clients.

I am a little saddened by the fact that I didn't get to work with many of the clients or didn't get to spend as much time with them as I had hoped or understood that I would going into my hours at UAID because I feel that more time with them would have helped me grow even farther in understanding PWDs. The only time that I was able to spend with the clients of UAID was the initial day when I went to the orientation for the Christmas Box program and also when we celebrated a birthday and a going away in the office. It seems that UAID clients don't come to the office very often. Though I didn't get to work directly with UAID's clients much I still

appreciate the time that I did get to spend with them and grow from them. They were all so sweet and kind and I wish I could have been able to get to know them more.

I did get to work with numerous volunteers while I was at UAID who were also helping put the ornaments together. I was so surprised at some of the things that some people say regarding PWDs. While putting together some of the ornaments there were two specific volunteers that would make comments here and there that would bother me. One of the most memorable comments was, "It takes a special person to work with these people, my niece has a 'special needs' child and I can't be around him for very long." I asked the lady why it is that she can't be around him for a long period of time and she replied, "It is because he is always in your face and it gets really bothersome." I am a very sensitive person and even though most people wouldn't take something like that to heart, I did. I thought to myself if this lady feels that she can't be around people with intellectual disabilities then why does she volunteer her time at somewhere that deals only with these people. I know that what she said wasn't absolutely horrible but it was enough to get to me. Another time while celebrating a birthday in the office I noticed that a worker was kind of short and rude to some of the clients that were there celebrating the birthday with us and didn't understand how she even had a job in the office.

Before this class and this volunteering assignment I never realized just how much discrimination and prejudice is put upon PWDs. I think that I never realized it because I have never been one to judge or discriminate against others. I think another reason I didn't realize how much discrimination is put upon PWDs is because I don't want to believe that there could be people in the world that can be so cruel to PWDs either. I thought as far as we have come in the world that there wouldn't be this kind of treatment to another human being, especially one

that never asked to have a disability. I guess I should have realized that even though racism has gone down it still has a long way to go so why would it not be the same with PWDs.

Although I didn't get to spend much time with the clients of UAID I still feel that I grew from this experience. Most of all I learned and understood more about discrimination and hurtful things that are said about people that can't help their situations. I guess I am one of those "special" people that the volunteer mentioned in her comment (which I hate it to be referred to as that by the way) who the PWDs deserve to have around to teach and support them. Before this class I didn't really put much thought into special education as part of my education career but after this experience and the joy I felt while working with the PWDs I just may end up going into special education instead of only teaching PWOD. Thank you for having us volunteer as a required part of this class, I am really happy that I was able to do this.