Volunteer Experience

Service learning was an opportunity for me to contribute something positive to my community, which is why it is an important component of Introduction to Psychology. I worked to clean out and repair used PC’s for a group for abused women. I felt that the work was fairly easy, and I enjoyed it because I thought of the women I may be helping to find jobs and take online classes to get themselves and their children back on their feet. Abused women are often psychologically affected from being physically and mentally abused by their spouses, which related to the class. This one small gift, a free computer, may give some hope to women who have felt trapped and scared, because now they have new opportunities.

I think I contributed to the community by volunteering to take on this project. Although I have probably never met any of the women who will receive the computers, I felt a connection to them because I was helping them. I had a friend who was abused by her husband, and I thought of her during my service project, which made my work hit home because I know what she went through emotionally and financially when she finally got away from him. Abuse in relationships effect an entire family, and I knew I was helping everyone involved, even if it was a small contribution, like giving a child the chance to use a computer for
homework. Being a woman, I cannot imagine what it would be like to escape an abusive man, and I know that they probably left with nothing. Any but of help is probably appreciated, and I felt that appreciation while I was working.

Chapter three somewhat relates to my service learning project because it discusses psychological gender differences in depth, which helps explain why men tend to be the abusive one in relationships. This chapter in the text discusses how men are much more aggressive by nature than women. It says, “The aggression gender gap pertains to physical aggression (such as hitting)” (88). It also states that “throughout the world, hunting, fishing, and warring are primarily men’s activities” (88). Also, in chapter three, it states, “People perceive men as more dominant, forceful, and independent, [whereas] women are more deferential, nurturant, and affiliative” (89). Since society has always viewed men this way, it is no wonder that some would think it is okay to go as far as to hit the woman they claim to love.

After the volunteer project I have embarked on, I would love to continue to do other forms of service for my community. Dave Makin, the man who set me up to work on the PC’s for abused women, told me that he would help me stay involved in the community and find more service opportunities. I plan to become a teacher, and I know that community service would look great on my resume when I am ready to be hired. This is a great way to get myself closer to a teaching position while also benefitting others in my community.

Helping others, no matter how large or small the project may be, leaves me with a great feeling of accomplishment, which is why I believe we volunteer. As humans, being able to take time to help those in need gets us closer to our own self-actualization. When we feel
comfortable enough with ourselves, we are more likely to reach out to others. I believe that altruism is a personality characteristic, but often people need to know how it feels to volunteer before they can find a sense of pride from doing it. This is why it is so important for everyone to get the opportunity to volunteer, which is the main reason it was incorporated into our coursework for this class.