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Exceptional Learners

Professor Shipman

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Reflection of Pasta Dinner/Bingo

Walking into the Oakwood common room, I was presented with a chaotic scene. Sitting around the many tables, were dozens of people from Vernon Manor eating pasta. As if a room full of mentally handicapped wouldn't be chaotic enough, we added spaghetti sauce and jello (for dessert) to the mix. Sauce covered smiles were displayed on bright faces as dinner shifted into hopes of winning bingo.

Walking around the noisy room to disperse checker pieces, I received many welcoming hellos and cheers from those sitting around tables. The majority of the pasta eaters/bingo players were of an older age group; the eldest looking to be around sixty years of age.

Even though some appeared to be of an older age, their attire looked as if it could have been worn by my classmates in the third or fourth grade. One particular woman was dressed in pink overalls with an adornment of red sauce all over the front. She had to be led around by a helper and she sucked on her fingers continuously.

Unlike the woman in the pink bibs, there were those who could function well on their own and were quite expressive and rambunctious. One such person sat close to Ryan (who was holding up the numbers) during bingo, and would get upset if he didn't call a number that was on her card.

The volunteers' goal was for each one of the players to get a bingo at least once; the result of which took quite a while. It was my job to make sure we weren't calling numbers too quickly and to sort the cards once it was called.

With the result of a player's first bingo they were allowed to come to the announcing table and receive a certificate and/or the choice of a special prize. A few people were not able to tell Jessica what their name was and the prize/certificate process confused them.

I remember one little old man (he was so adorable), he was not only mentally handicapped but blind as well. When claiming his prize, he needed assistance saying his name and then touching each prize object; he had to choose from a troll, two different picture frames, and an American flag. I found it a little ironic that he chose one of the picture frames.

I was comfortable overall in interacting with those visiting from Vernon Manor. It was a little intimidating, but only because there were forty or so visitors and there was a lot of activity going on at once. My pasta/bingo experience was a positive one and it ended nicely with the approach of a woman from Vernon who said, "You look so pretty tonight and I got a bingo!"