

Stephanie Bennett

Prof. Peck

Service Project Reaction Paper

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Character Counts

Character Counts is an organization for youth that emphasizes the need for people to donate their time and services to help people in need or trouble. The age of these people does not matter in this situation. The people in this organization work with the young, adults, and the elderly. In my experience with this service project, I was working with kids ranging from sixth grade to eighth grade.

Upon entering the middle school, I was surprised with what I saw and heard. The building wasn't brand new but it really didn't look too bad inside and out. What I was surprised with was how the students spoke and what they spoke about. These kids were talking about things that I never even thought of when I was in middle school. They were using bad language and were very disrespectful to their elders/adults. Because of this, I immediately realized just how important service is to others. Some of these kids have probably been subjected to this type of language and atmosphere their whole life, so naturally, this is how they would act.

After waiting for about forty-five minutes for the students, we quickly began our activities. The students were split up into groups and we were all supposed to get to know each other. At first, the students didn't want to cooperate. I started out asking why they don't like to be here to break the ice. Immediately, I got a different number of responses. That week, the Students were learning about team work and sports. Because the students I had were African American like myself, the students and I felt we could talk on a real level. The students felt like

when people come and try to work with them that they get treated “weird.” What they mean by “weird” is that they felt like the people would talk to them like they were not very smart. I realized that all these kids have a lot of potential; they just need someone to help them bring it out and be a positive role model for them. They need someone to keep it real with them. What I mean by that is speak your mind and let them know what’s really going on. You should be honest and "real" with the children. One student felt like the people from Character Counts didn’t really care for them but that it was just a job with money for them.

This experience helped me realize a couple things. One, I am very thankful for my family and how I was raised. Two, I had positive role models around me when I was younger. Finally, I shouldn’t take the things that I have and my opportunities for granted. This experience makes me want to do the same for someone else, like show them the light.

Children need to learn that their character counts and that they start building their character for who they will become now. Someone needs to explain to them that their success and happiness depends on who they are on the inside and how they act on the outside. This person can be a college student, parent, teacher, and etc. But good character doesn’t just happen. It’s up to each of us to teach young people right from wrong.

Service is something that everyone should be involved in. We all have the potential to do something and we all have something to offer, it’s just important for us to realize we need to share our gifts with others. Whether it be playing a game or just sitting and talking with a child, it’s the simple things that make a difference in someone’s life and our own. I would encourage anyone to take part in service projects, not just once or twice either, but on a regular basis. I feel that it is our duty to be a testament to others and to share our gifts with others because you may never know how grateful someone is to have a little bit of your time and to know you truly care

about them. Every little bit helps, and not only does it affect the small child you are teaching, but it has a huge impact on yourself as well. People learn through experience and through helping others; when this happens, our views on the world are changed.

This service project was a great experience for me; it left me with a change of heart and mind. Even though things got off to a rough start, it all worked out in the end. I have always thought to myself, “what do I have to offer these kids, I don’t have enough money to help them,” and other thoughts of that nature. This experience opened my eyes to the fact that it’s the little things that make someone’s day and that we all have something to offer, if we would only share our gifts with others.