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ARC Reflection

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EDUC 352: Prof. Schilling

To the world you may be one person but to one person you may be the world. This is how I felt when I participated at the ARC event on December 12, 2009 at the Church of the Brethren. I arrived there at 5:30 in order to help set up and stayed until 8:30 to tear down the tables and chairs. We helped the disabled adults do a simple craft, gave them snacks, and played a few games of Bingo. I had a great time at the ARC event and I learned a lot while enjoying time with the disabled!

The night proceeded how I thought it would. I have a few cousins who are mentally disabled and this is what I expected at the event. At 6:00, everyone strolled in and found a seat. It was a lot of fun talking to them and asking them about Christmas and their interests. Most of them would start talking before I could ask a question! They are so thrilled to have your attention and to talk to you! Once everyone got there and we began the festivities, I sat at a table with a diverse group of disabled adults. There was a lady named Alice, who could not talk at all and would not respond to anything. There was a man named Kevin, who was very quick with responding and could hold a whole conversation with me and was very smart! There was a young man named Matt, who could not talk very well but could respond perfectly by shaking his head and smiling. There was also an older man named Phil who had a high pitched voice, loved coffee, and was the sweetest man.

It was amazing to see how difficult the simple craft was for the adults to handle. They received about 7 pieces of different paper of different colors and they had to assemble them into a Santa Claus figure. We also had one pre-made so they could see what it looked like and know what to do. It was very easy for them to get mixed up in direction and color. We had to help them a lot in showing them direction. I also made sure I encouraged them continually, or else they might have gotten annoyed or disappointed in their work.

The snack was fun to give to them, because they were so excited to receive it! They were like kids in a candy shop and that is exactly how some of these adults acted. It was amazing to see how a simple smile or my attention could lift their spirits so much. After five minutes of meeting one of them, they treat you as your best friend. I felt like it was very easy to talk to them. I went up to many of them and said hello and asked if they were ready for Christmas. That was a hit question, they were all so excited!

Nothing really surprised me. However, there were several things I noticed that I easily forget and need to be reminded. These things will help in my classroom as well. I was reminded of the constant encouraging and smile you must give. Since these adults take a longer time to do simple tasks, they may get discouraged more easily. Another thing is to go slow and have them do little bits at a time. For example, doing the craft I had them look for one part at a time and glue it on. Then during bingo, I had them look for the letter and then go down and see if that specific number was on their card. This is helpful for my classroom to know that everyone's needs are different and I have to adapt my lessons to all of their needs. I need to be able to break things down easily for my students. I was also reminded how easily someone can be affected by your actions. These disabled adults watched everything you did and sometimes commented on it, and young students will too. You have to keep a positive attitude and not lose your cool.