

## **Poverty Simulation Workshop**

On October 28, 2009, I participated in a pre-professional workshop in which I got a first-hand look at what it means to live in poverty. Upon beginning the workshop, I was given a certain amount of money and was assigned to a 'family.' As the workshop progressed, I was asked to complete certain tasks, such as pay a bill, go to work, go to a parent-teacher conference, buy groceries, and pay for unexpected expenses. During each stage in the workshop, I was given less and less time to complete each task. I was asked to work with my 'husband' and 'children' in order to make the household run smoothly and to be able to pay for all necessary items. Toward the end of the workshop, it got harder and harder to be able to pay for things. Sometimes we would miss a check from work or have to pay for an unexpected vehicle or house repair. Other times, we didn't have time to get groceries because we were busy going from job to job and didn't get our paycheck into the bank in time. The situations became more complex to the point where we could not buy food for our 'family' and we had to have our 'teenage daughter' get a job to help cover expenses. Because we were in such a difficult financial situation, we learned how people with low income and people that struggle from poverty live. They are more concerned about simply putting food on the table, instead of going to a school event for their kids. Because I participated in this simulation, I have a much better understanding of what people in poverty go through. My future students may have a job outside of school, especially if they are in high school, and they may be helping keep their household together. This workshop definitely helped me with my personal development as well as my professional development.