Jade K. Clark

Honors 1010: Gateway to University Honors

Jessica King Fall 2013

This I Believe: “Lifting as I Climb”

When I was twelve years old, and summer camps were no longer taking kids my age, I had to find something to do with my free time during summer break. My mom and I looked at a lot of different options and we finally came up with volunteering at the public library. This would be my summer pastime for the next three years and during most of that time period I absolutely hated it; well at least that’s what I thought.

I remember dreading the fact that I had to walk 20 minutes to my community library to shelve books for four hours, three days a week. While all the other kids my age were either out swimming, on vacation, or getting paid, I was standing on my feet all day, shelving a cartload of nearly 200-300 children’s books, answering patron questions, or reading to a group of young children.

It wasn’t until my final year of volunteering that I realized how much I took my three-year service experience for granted. During these three years I had the opportunity to gain such essential skills that I can benefit from in any job that I pursue. Not many people can say that they gained customer service experience at just twelve years old, or that they were able to enhance their organizational skills through actual hands-on experience. Also I did not realize the difference that I was making in the lives of the people that I had served in my community. Reading and playing games with those young children probably played a big part in their phonetic and comprehension skills. Also I was able to aid the elderly patrons with locating items and operating the computers, which they otherwise may not have been to accomplish on their own.

Now, four years after the start of my volunteer-ship, and as an eighteen-year-old young woman, I can truly see the importance, significance, and value that were embedded in those three years of community service. I now view that experience as my stepping-stone into the real world and into the world of serving my community. After volunteering at the library I have engaged in a number of other service activities, including tutoring in two different programs at my high school for three years, mentoring young girls, and even working on a State Representative campaign.

Without serving your community you are not getting the most out of life. Service gives you the opportunity to impact another’s life in a way that they could possibly not do for themselves. I now see that serving my community is not about having an extra item to place onto my résumé, but instead is about helping others, and essentially lifting as I climb.