

Reflections

2016-2017

By SUNY Delhi



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Editorial Board—Students from Fall 2016 & Spring 2017 English 100

Nicolette Adams
Dakota Baker
Devin Baratto
Da'Ron Bartholomew
Brian Binns
Zandorra Blyden
Zach Bright
Megan Brown
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Mary Colleran
Ada Connors
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Justin Rabjohn
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Ty-Shaun Richardson
Antonio Russo
Asako Sato
Tanner Steinorth
Brad Sweet
Josiah Turner
Korbin Valenzuela
Elyse Villarroel
Mark Volpe

2016-2017 Contest Winners—Best Reflection Essay*

The following students received cash prizes based on rankings from their peers:

1st Prize—\$75—Kumiko Kawasaki

2nd Prize—\$50—Justin Rabjohn

3rd Prize—\$25—Antonio Russo

*Award Winners were chosen using a blind review process. Submissions from the SUNY Delhi campus were solicited and ranked by students in Dr. West's Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 ENGL 100: Freshman Composition courses.

Special thanks to Vincent Ferrara for designing the cover.

About Service-Learning at SUNY Delhi

SUNY Delhi Mission Statement

Because the student is the most important member of the SUNY Delhi community, the college is committed to student success through academic achievement, civic engagement and experiential learning.

SUNY Delhi definition of Service-Learning

Service-learning engages students for life-long success, promotes academic excellence and builds strategic partnerships through civic engagement and experiential learning. Service-learning is a combination of classroom instruction and community service with a focus on critical, reflective thinking. Students are able to become active participants in the learning process by applying what they learn in the classroom to solve real-life problems. SUNY Delhi defines service-learning as:

- a) An educational experience based within an academic, credit bearing course in which
- b) Students participate in an organized service activity that meets community needs as identified by our partners and is facilitated by the instructor to meet set learning goals and
- c) **Reflect** on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and
- d) Are able to become active participants in the learning process and gain an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.

Brianna Bennett

According to SUNY Delhi, Service-Learning is an organized, credit bearing activity in which you reflect on and gain an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. I completed my five hours of service at my local library in Wurtsboro, NY. My service consisted of two sessions of assisting children, ages 3-9, in making crafts. This experience was amazing and I learned a lot in the five hours I spent with them. It was fun and I completed school work while doing it.

The first craft the children made was “Floam.” There were about fifteen kids, plus the parents. Floam is made of warm water, cold water, Styrofoam balls, Elmer’s glue and borax. The instructions only consisted of mixing these all together at separate times and then waiting for the ingredients to take action and make this playdough-like substance. The children really enjoyed this project and they wanted the directions so they could make more at home. From this experience I learned that the little things can make a child happy. Knowing that they produced this project by themselves made them feel really confident; I could tell by the giant smiles on their faces after the liquid transformed to a moldable solid. Most of the boys molded figures from the video games they play and the girls made different types of jewelry. I like seeing all the children come out for a couple hours instead of sitting home and playing screened games.

The second craft was “Monster Gloves.” About twelve showed up for this one. Before I went to the library I had to sew up the openings of fluffy winter gloves. A pair of gloves could make two monsters. We provided stuffing to go inside the glove when it was finished and lots of different materials they could use while creating their monsters such as, googly eyes, construction paper, feathers, buttons, and markers. The children were enjoying it so much they were screaming over each other and we had to quiet down the room. Every monster was made uniquely different.

Afterwards we took pictures of all the scary, funny and pretty monsters they made. During this event I realized how active and talkative a child can be. I spent a lot of my time helping a three-year-old who was having lots of fun but had a hard time with the gluing of materials. Most three-year-olds are shy towards other people, but when I got down on his level he would not stop talking. I heard about everything! He told me how much his “sitter” (sister) liked fourth grade and how Mommy and Daddy work a lot so he goes to daycare. It was enjoyable. I really had a lot of fun completing my five hours.

My experiences taught me a lot about myself and my community. I learned that with children I am very impatient. What could take me five seconds to complete, would take them two minutes. It was very hard not to take over when I saw them struggling, but in the end I knew it would be a great accomplishment to them and I just had to watch on the sideline. I also learned that this is an excellent way to have the community come together, at least families with young kids. There are a few crafts that are more challenging and those ones are for the adults. The adults can come together and learn more about their neighbors. This was a great Service-Learning project and I am glad it was a requirement because you learn so much.

Justin Rabjohn

As an individual who views time as invaluable, I tend to not participate in a lot of community service activities. Initially, the little “SL” added on to my Freshman Composition class brought me nightmares and stress, but after partaking in a service-learning activity, I can honestly say that service learning is not difficult, or even boring. In fact, I had fun, while also helping the local Delhi community in its Suicide Awareness Walk. Service-learning consists of helping your local community, while absorbing all the benefits that come with such action.

Suicide is a huge epidemic not only in the United States, but worldwide. Suicide takes thousands of lives every year, and it is for this reason suicide prevention awareness walks are held. For my service-learning activity, I participated in Delhi’s Suicide Awareness Walk. Although I am not personally impacted by this tragedy, many individuals unfortunately are. I was able to gather several friends to sign up for the event, and was even able to join a “walking team” for my residence hall, showing support for Team Murphy. Upon arrival at the registration tent, I was happy to see people I knew. After registering and exploring the bustling cluster of tents set up, I knew I had made the right choice for my service-learning event. I saw many of my friends and hall-mates had decided to come to the event. The atmosphere was especially great; a sizable turnout of people mixed between students and Delhi residents, and everyone was happy, ready to show their support. People were throwing around a football nearby, while others gathered for group photos. Balloons and necklaces were passed out with colors corresponding to how suicide had an impact on a personal level. Perhaps the biggest moment of the event was when I noticed the friend that I had brought was telling his story about how suicide had personally impacted him. He was calling his parents asking for names to include in the ceremony recognition, and donating money to the cause. A moment of silence, along with a reading of all the names submitted of those who had taken their own lives, was followed by a releasing of all the balloons into the sky. It was the rainbow of balloons released into the sky that created a special somber moment, but also commenced the actual walk.

A stream of supporters quickly formed, and we began our journey through the village. I was able to socialize with friends, while getting exercise and seeing the nearby village. We looped back onto campus, and made our way around O’Connor Hall until we made it to the finish line back at the registration parking lot. We were greeted with hotdogs, which was exactly what I needed to top off a great service-learning experience. After the walk, I felt accomplished and would have gladly taken a second lap. The parking lot grew empty, and as I finished eating with a group of friends, I realized just how easy, yet rewarding service-learning can be. Registration began at one o’clock in the afternoon, and by the time I left the event it was already five o’clock. I was able to double the amount of required service needed, while having fun and learning about fellow students’ struggles. Service-learning does not have to be difficult, and participating in the walk changed my mindset in a very positive way on partaking in future service-learning events. I learned that helping others through service learning does not have to involve physically exhausting labor, and can truly bring a feeling of positivity and accomplishment.

Service-learning can seem painful, but it doesn’t have to be. I was able to exercise, socialize, and learn a lot about my friends and how suicide has had too real of an impact in their lives. I would enjoy doing similar events in the future, and after having such a positive experience, may decide to take on more service-learning challenges.

Nicolette Adams

Martin Luther King once said, “Anybody can be great because anybody can serve”. Helping or doing work for someone provides a feeling of fulfillment even in the smallest degree. As a student enrolled in a service-learning course, I decided to use this opportunity to expand children’s minds in literature. I served at my local library. The day before Thanksgiving, numerous children from multiple age groups met at the Kent Library for crafts and storytelling. Through this service-learning project, I was able to acquire insight and teach meaningful messages.

Thanksgiving is a day for families and friends to come together and acknowledge all the events that they are grateful for. There is nothing better than different individuals coming together to commemorate and participate in this celebration. Many children showed up, so I was able to take my place reading to the younger children. I am an early childhood education major, so this project was very enjoyable for me. There were many other volunteers that participated in reading to the young kids. When it was my turn, I was able to read two different stories. The first one was, *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault. It’s an alphabet story that also attempts to teach children about friendship, sharing and caring for others. It’s also an attractive tune that teaches children the letters of the alphabet in an educational and memorable way. The children loved it. Seeing the joy and churning minds in work brought compassion to my heart. The second story I read was *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats. The children especially loved this story because it had just snowed a few days before. Their faces lit up with excitement when I read, “He pretended he was a mountain climber, he climbed up a great big tall heaping mountain of snow, and slid all the way down”. After reading, and to make the time go by until the parents arrived again, we played some music and the children danced around. The older kids partook in more intricate arts and crafts including the music as well.

This opening ensured that I knew I was on the right path in life. I was not getting paid, this wasn’t on the books, however, the time flew by and I only wanted to stay there longer. It was so amusing to be able to give even a few memorable moments to others. As I grow older I aspire to be capable of enabling and encouraging scholarship and achievement. I feel that this project gave me insight as to what I aim to contribute to the world someday.

Every student has the opportunity to assist their community and expand their own learning experience through service-learning. It’s amazing how open your mind can become when you are around such intense personalities like the ones of four-year-olds. My experience was a valuable one for me and I look forward to being able to do something like this in the future. From here, my only hope is to be gifted enough to leave an outstanding, beneficial impact on the kids I have the chance to teach.

Scott Duarte

Community service is something that I've always admired, but had never really experienced for myself. A couple of years ago, I did a few things for the church, but that's really it. I grew up in a small town, which for the most part is pretty upper class. I never really took a minute to think about what it must be like for less fortunate families who can't afford basic things like a real Thanksgiving dinner.

This past break, I helped out the Dobbs Ferry Police Department by delivering laundry baskets full of things like pasta, loaves of bread, full turkeys, and even some champagne. This as a whole is a good deed, and made me feel great, but the real thing that I took away from this whole experience is that these less fortunate families are the ones that are the most generous. One thing I saw when delivering a basket to a family at the top of a four story walkup was the mother of the family giving bread to the family next door to them. This was interesting because although they have so little, they are still willing to give some of it away. The reason these families are the most generous is because they know strenuous it is to have nothing.

Seeing the insides of these homes was also very interesting. Some of these families had things piled up to the ceiling and general clutter everywhere. All of these families had children as well, so there were toys, clothes, and other things all over the homes. Witnessing this with my own eyes was sad, knowing that while I can sit home and enjoy a Thanksgiving dinner with my family around, there are families like these out there living like that.

Working with a Dobbs Ferry police officer was also an experience. I heard a lot of stories about past years, and how when they started doing these Thanksgiving deliveries it made such a huge impact on the community. He told me a lot about how many mothers are raising these kids alone, and this was evident in the deliveries. I didn't see a single father in the eighteen homes we delivered to. I grew up with both parents around and I know it was even tough on them raising a family together, so it really made me wonder how difficult it must be for these single mothers to raise several children on their own in apartments that are roughly the size of my living room.

Going into this day, I never expected to really learn anything new. I assumed that I would just be the guy to carry stuff upstairs for a few hours and be on my way, but it really did make an impact on the way I look at things now. This also opened my mind to a few other things such as how these kids get gifts during the holidays. It was definitely an eye-opening experience, and I look forward to helping out the community even more in the future.

Mikayla Mitchell

I grew up in a very small town one in which there was only one other girl, that was my age. I didn't socialize much, and as weird as this sounds, I lived right next to a cemetery. Growing up I didn't talk to many people; I was always the kid that was heavy and never talked. I had no friends in my class so I was the outcast. As I got older, it was better. I found things in school I enjoyed that forced me to socialize such as sports and band. I think living next to a cemetery creeped people out because they were scared of being so close to one at night. Many people think that cemeteries are where the zombies and ghosts come from, but for me they are just a place where dead people go. Naturally, when I heard about the service-learning activity being cemetery clean up, I decided it would be easy. What I didn't think about was the fact that I was the only girl willing to clean up a cemetery. Yes, I did hang out with the boys in my town but they are nothing like the boys I had to work with. My brother's friends and my friends are what you would consider "redneck" or "hillbilly." I mean our town's original name was Buckshole, so what else would you expect? I have never had to socialize with guys from the city, only some girls which have become great friends to me. I didn't know what to expect from them especially since I'm not very talkative and tend to be shy.

The day of the cemetery cleanup I had to get up earlier than most of the guys did because I had decided to go home and come back in the morning rather than staying on campus. I was early so my instructor had anyone who was there sign in and grab a tee-shirt. After everyone arrived we were all told to grab rakes and go to the van. We were a lucky group because the weather was nice for once so no one got soaked like the times before. When we got to the cemetery we were instructed on what to do. First we were set out to pick up sticks and put them in trash bins. Many of us stuck around the group but we really didn't talk because we all didn't know each other. After picking up the sticks we were sent away with rakes to clean up the pine cones. Most of the group stuck together but I went on my own and raked all along the tree line. While raking, I realized that I felt out of place and that I was terrible at socializing. I decided to walk back and find the instructor and the other students. I decided to help them even though I really didn't want to, so we all continued to rake up leaves and pinecones and I was silent the whole time. While doing that some of the boys started messing around because we were all tired of raking and just wanted to get some pizza. They started slacking and playing around which helped me loosen up and start to actually talk to them. By the time we were finished we were all laughing, talking, and joking around.

This service-learning project taught me that boys like to slack off because I had felt that I had done the most work, and that city boys are pretty cool and not judgmental. I had thought that they would judge me. I felt that they thought I was socially awkward and wouldn't want to hang out with me because I'm not like them. Overall I felt that the service-learning project taught me to socialize more and that city people are pretty cool and not very judgmental. I think that service-learning is good for people, especially people who don't get out enough. I believe it would help people become comfortable with people who have totally different backgrounds from them.

Antonio Russo

I would describe myself as a smart, hardworking, shy person. That being said, when I learned about the service-learning paper, I didn't know how I felt about it. I wasn't worried so much about the hard work because I've had a job since I was fourteen and I've always helped my dad out. My biggest fear was having to meet new people and communicate with them. I'm so shy that if I don't have a need or a reason to talk to someone, I won't. I went through my senior year of high school without even talking to some of my teachers more than twice. That's why I was very scared of this experience at first and I picked something that would make me feel a little more comfortable.

For my service-learning activity I decided to volunteer for pee-wee football in Oneonta. I grew up playing football and it was a big part of my becoming the man I am today. I thought it would be a good place to complete my service-learning activity. This decision also helped me to not be so nervous because I knew there were bound to be some people that I knew there. My service-learning consisted of setting up for the game, running the concession stand, and picking up. Setting up and picking up were the easiest part of my experience. I had to put out all of the garbage cans, set up the pylons, and set the tables up for the concession stand. At the end of the day I had to put all the materials away and bring the garbage down to the dumpsters.

My favorite part was when I was working the concession stand. This was my favorite part because it really helped me learn something about myself. After being worked up and nervous about having to talk to people it ended up not being bad at all. I really liked the person I was working with and it ended up being very easy to talk to her by the end of the day. I also got to talk to many people I knew whose kids were playing football. It felt great getting all of the compliments from them, and having them tell me I was doing a good thing.

I've played football my entire life and never really realized how much work goes on behind the scenes. Without the people volunteering and running the concession stands or moving the chains, we wouldn't be able to have football games or afford new equipment. Because of this realization, I felt naïve. I made sure to thank my mother that day because she went to every one of my football games and never really got the chance to see me play because she was always working in the concession stand. When I was younger I was always mad at her for that, but now I realize what kind of person she really is. I am incredibly thankful to have had her support.

In conclusion, I'm am very thankful I had the opportunity to do a service-learning activity. I had a great experience working at pee-wee football and even decided to go back and help on another day. I learned a lot about myself and about my community during this experience. I learned that I get nervous way too easily and it's not as hard to talk to new people as I make it out to be. I also learned that volunteers are what make communities grow; without them many organizations wouldn't survive. I had a great time and if I had to take another course that required service-learning I wouldn't be as nervous.

Adam Brickle

Golf in Schools is a golf instructional activity that is aimed towards growing the game of golf by increasing participation among the youth of Delaware County. The program designates representatives from SUNY Delhi to ultimately run the program and carry it out in schools, with the help of the gym teachers, the program director Dylan, and Jim Lees. The date of the activity was January 31st 2017. The name of the school we went to was Stamford. Students ages ranged from 5-years old to 18-years old, and there were approximately 120-160 students that received golf instruction.

The pre-lesson interview was where we started with the students when they filed in from their classrooms. Dylan would first explain to the students briefly how to hold the club, how to stand and aim properly, and how to be safe when handling and being around golf clubs. Once his speech was over, there were 3 different golf stations set up where the students learned different facets of the game. Putting was introduced at the first station, then chipping and the short game was at another, and finally the full swing and long game. These three separate stations were operated simultaneously and each was taught by an instructor. The students were split up into groups so they could rotate through each station for about 15 minutes. This allowed the students to actually swing the club a good amount of times and keep them interested. The introduction of the skill that I taught was the short game and chipping. My individual lesson was for the students to learn how to correct two pre-swing principles before the chip shot can begin. I adapted some of my speech and phrases to suit the needs of high school students and kindergartners alike in an effort to implement some early fundamentals with the students in a way they could understand without too much complication.

The first principle was how the feet need to be somewhat close together, if not touching one another, for a chip shot. This lesson creates balance and stability before the shot and creates a base for a short, compact swing. I demonstrated for them a correct footing position, and an incorrect position. I did this before the shot so they could see and mimic my actions before they swung themselves. The second lesson was keeping your hands close together to form a solid, "one-unit" grip. Once that was established, I gave them a drill to practice so they could more easily understand how hard, or aggressively, to swing the club. I demonstrated a swing that was too powerful like that of the long game, and a swing that was too short, like a putting stroke. They all immediately noticed those were both wrong. Finally, I corrected my actions and swung easily and with a moderate pace which they clearly pointed out as being the correct swing. I then asked them to show me exactly what I had just taught them about the chip shot by getting up there and hitting some shots themselves. They hit shots while I was instructing and correcting some, but mostly I encouraged students to keep at it when they hit the net or made a good swing, or even if they weren't quite getting it. Overall, I received a lot of feedback from the students regarding their interest in the game, if it seemed like fun, and if it was something they might like to try in the future. For the most part, the students had a great time trying to hit chip shots into the net. Some ended up getting competitive with each other to see who could hit the most into the red, which was rewarding to see. Some students were considering trying it out for real this upcoming spring. Some students said they would definitely be interested in starting to play the game once and a while or avidly, and there were others who had little to no interest in picking up the game. It is

unrealistic to want every student to immediately start playing golf regularly. So even if only a few students from each class leave interested in possibly playing golf and/or telling their parents about their new-found interest, it could grow the game not only in the youth, but as a family activity as well. With that being said, I believe the program is achieving exactly what it set out to do in growing the game of golf. I also believe we assisted in achieving that goal last Tuesday, and if not exceeded it.

The lesson was an overall success, and I learned a lot. It was successful because no one got hurt, and a lot of kids had fun playing the game of golf. Some even admitted they wanted to play regularly, which is an absolute success for the Golf in Schools program. I learned a ton of useful information by completing this exercise that will help me in the future. First, I learned to cater to the needs of children ages 5-18 by adapting the methods and procedures of my teaching philosophy so they can learn at a consistent rate. I also observed Dylan and learned a lot about how to speak to children of all ages and how to keep an introduction about golf as brief as possible. I learned that all students learn differently, but all students can learn fundamentals if they allow themselves to be corrected and to learn further if they desire. I also learned that speaking to 6-year-old students is much different than speaking to 14-year-old students. I had to make it simple for each age group while considering their mental capacities to learn and absorb information. All these things I learned will certainly help me for my future in the golf industry. It gives me a better understanding on how to run junior clinics, which are usually a vital part of a country club, resort, or public golf facility. This information will be helpful to me pretty much anywhere I go.

The benefits for the community include increased revenue for the area's golf courses, and it gets students outside and playing a game that is fun, competitive and builds character. It benefits the school by having increased participation in the school's golf team as well. By providing this service for free, the school and local golf course can directly benefit from the knowledge of the instructors. The students receive free instruction by golf professionals that would otherwise be somewhat costly to obtain. It also benefits growing the game because by participating in these golf activities, these students may want to begin playing golf and becoming possible lifetime players. This directly benefits the game of golf because increasing participation among youth has always been among the top priorities of the PGA. By starting young, it creates building blocks for these students to introduce their friends and/or families to the game.

Owen Henning

In my experience living in the town of Delhi, usually the only thing you hear about the students is the trouble they cause instead of the things they do to help. Until I took a class that required service learning, I did not realize how much the school actively tries to get the students involved in benefiting the community. This experience made me realize that service learning is a huge help to the community and more than just a requirement to pass a class.

Until this year I had never heard of service learning. I didn't think 2.5 hours was a lot of time to have to spend doing this, but as a full-time student who also works after class, I wasn't sure when I would be able to get my hours done. I was glad our teacher gave us a few options to get them done together as a class or I probably would have procrastinated until the last minute. Knowing that it would be my best bet to get it over with, I signed up for the first option he gave us to go help clean up the cemetery on Community Service Day. Without ever going to the cemetery prior to this I was not sure what we would be in for.

Upon pulling up to the cemetery immediately I noticed how big it was and thought it must take a lot of effort to maintain. At first glance the place looked pretty much perfect, but once we were given a few tasks you could tell there is always a lot that needs to be done. The groundskeeper had given us a few simple tasks like picking up sticks and raking pine cones. Although both tasks are extremely tedious, it is undeniably an important thing to get done. With the help of all of us we were able to clean up a pretty big portion of the cemetery in only a few hours. Even though the jobs we had assigned to us may not have seemed to be the most crucial of tasks, it was still a fulfilling experience. I asked the groundskeeper if it was just him who worked there and he told me he is usually by himself taking care of the place. It was obvious how grateful he was for any help he could get, and he definitely could use it. For a summer while I was still in high school I worked at a park and a lot of days we spent doing the same kind of thing to keep up on the never-ending maintenance. At the very least we made his day a lot easier, which he appreciated. I did not mind having to help out for a few hours and if I was not graduating this year I would take another class that required service-learning.

It is a good thing Delhi offers classes that have a service-learning requirement for many reasons. On the same day we all went to the cemetery, a few other groups of students went to do other activities as well for the annual Community Service Day that is held on campus. Whether it was for service-learning or not, many students had the chance to help someone in the community that day, from cleaning up a cemetery, to picking apples for the food bank. I am glad to have been able to participate.

Jordan Fragale

Service-learning is an important part of education because it helps people to step out of their comfort zones and do something good for the community. The little things that people can do for the community are taken for granted, especially in this day and time. We get so caught up in the new technology and everything else going on that we forget about the little things that do mean a lot to people. Going out into the community and helping isn't only beneficial to others, but to yourself. It makes sense to make your own community a better place for everyone, including yourself.

After the long process of figuring out what it was that I wanted to do for my Service-Learning project, I finally decided that I wanted to participate in the Suicide Awareness Walk that took place on campus, as well as throughout the town of Delhi. Before signing up for this walk I was a little hesitant because I wasn't sure how I was going to feel at the event or if I would even like doing it. After arriving at the event, I noticed that a lot of people had showed up and it just seemed like a good atmosphere to be in. Looking around I noticed that people were engaged with everything going on because they knew someone who committed suicide or were there to support a friend who knew someone. Either way, everyone who came to the walk was there to come together and support the ones who needed it. Right before the walk was about to start, people could write the name of a loved one on a balloon and as the person with the microphone said the name on the balloon they could release them up into the sky. Looking around, I saw that this was very emotional for people because it was almost as if they were releasing their loved one into the sky and setting them free. As the walk started, you could see how many people were there because the line stretched far from front to back as we walked out into the town and back on to campus. This just goes to show how the community can come together to support one another.

After looking back at the event and reflecting on how I think everything went, as well as reflecting on myself, I have come to realize some things. I have come to see that I am not one to go and step very far out of my comfort zone. I am one who likes to stick with the things that I know, but I need to start trying new things to gain life knowledge and experience. This activity could have possibly opened a door to new experiences and trying to be more comfortable doing new things. This activity helped me learn some things about the community. I gladly found out that when an important event is going on, people are willing to take the time out of their day to come together to support one another. I was pleased to see the community come together like this because a good social environment can lead to a healthy thriving society.

As I reflect on Service-learning overall, I am realizing that service is an important aspect of life and wouldn't be hard to incorporate into someone's everyday life. Many people choose not to do these things because they don't think it has much of an impact on people and that may be true for some people, but it goes a long way for some. Sometimes doing good things can make yourself feel good and that goes a long way. Thinking back to my choice of picking the Suicide Awareness Walk, I am glad that I did it. This activity gave me a new perspective and way of thinking which will benefit me in the future and help me to be more open-minded when making decisions.

It is the unknown that we fear. Going into the service-learning portion of class, I didn't have any clue what the experience would hold. Originally I had a very closed mind towards the idea of having to donate my free time as a course requirement in order to pass my Freshmen Composition class. My first thought when hearing that I had to do community service was that I would be stuck for three hours playing bingo with elderly people like I did in high school, but this wasn't the case at all. In reality my experience with service-learning actually seemed to be more of a blessing than my originally perceived burden.

For my service learning activity, I volunteered at the Accepted Students Day, Saturday, April 2nd. Going into volunteering, the idea of having to wake up at 7:30 a.m. didn't thrill me, but knowing that the deadline for my paper was approaching, I had to sacrifice my sleep to turn in my work. As I arrived at the event I was greeted by many smiling faces, which I couldn't understand. I felt as though "What could anyone be happy about at 7:30 in the morning on a snowy day?" The bags under my eyes seemed to be very prevalent as the senior ambassador Simba offered me a cup of fresh coffee and then presented me with the Delhi green student service jacket. The service-learning coordinators then informed me that I would be guiding the incoming students and their families into the building.

As I stood in the cold with a dull green jacket greeting people with a generic "Goodmorning. Welcome to Delhi," I began to question if passing Freshman Composition was worth pneumonia. My hatred for community service continued to grow. As what seemed like forty more cars pulled into the parking lot of the school, it finally seemed like my days of being a unpaid valet had finally came to an end, and I couldn't have been any more excited. I began to walk into the school and was greeted by the ambassadors of the program as they handed me more coffee to warm me up.

It was then that I was introduced to Mr. Will Defreese. As he started to thank me for my service, a part of me felt as though I hadn't really accomplished anything. Going into the day I had the idea that I would actually be the one taking the incoming students on college tours and telling them about the school and everything that it had to offer. With my expectations for the day defeated, I had then decided to actually inquire about helping out with the tours as it had been a weird dream of mine to lead one. Mr. Defreese then kindly declined my request as he informed me that the only people that gave tours were actually student ambassadors.

Now feeling more defeated than I was before, I finally decided to call it quits and attempt to just leave and return to my bed. It was then that Mr. Defreese informed me that even though I couldn't lead a tour on my own he would allow me to shadow one and assist one of the ambassadors. I shadowed one of the student ambassadors named Fuki, a foreign exchange student from Japan. As we journeyed around the campus, I found myself leading the tour rather than shadowing it, garnering the attention of Mr Defreese. As the tours came to an end he began to compliment me on my initiative to volunteer and my knowledge of the campus, eventually asking me if I would be interested in becoming a student ambassador next semester.

As humans we find ourselves jumping to conclusions and being very closed-minded to new ideas. It isn't until we actually allow ourselves to experience new things that we notice that our initial thoughts were actually wrong. The same could be said about my initial view on service-learning, originally believing it to be irrelevant to anything related to my freshman class. Instead of being a burden, it actually came out a blessing. Volunteering for Accepted Students

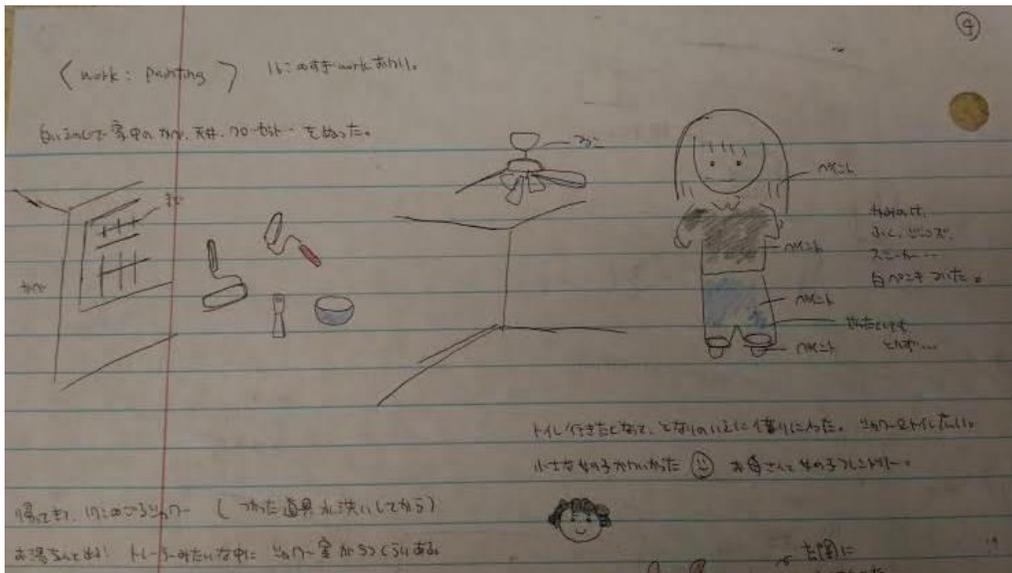
Day gave me the opportunity to gain many new connections and the chance to eventually have an on-campus job, making me very thankful that I had volunteered my time.

Kumiko Kawasaki

My new life started with birds singing in the humid and shining sky. Looking at a vapor trail continuing forever, I took a deep breath. I took pure and fresh air filled with vitality into my whole body. Now I was in Baton Rouge for a mission trip. Feeling that I was in harmony with beautiful nature, I heard the members of Delhi College Interfaith Club (DCIC) waking up. On this day, March 1 in 2017, my three-day mission of repairing flooded houses began.

The first day, I went to a house with about 10 members of DCIC. My task was to paint walls, ceilings, and closets. Since it was my very first time painting a house, I could not help frowning at the smell of thinner when I opened the paint container. Dipping a paint roller into a container and removing extra paint from the roller, I started to paint the wall. From right to left, top to bottom, the sparse and unconfident trail of my paint showed the awkwardness of my roller motion. As I kept painting, however, I was soon able to draw a smooth and steady pathway with confidence. I had a room in my mind to enjoy listening to American pop music which was coming from a teammate's music player. More than five hours had passed when I finished all the work. Reflecting sunshine, the white house was now shining. My jeans and sneakers had white patches, and my black hair turned white. I was spoken to by everyone I met: "What happened to your black hair? You did hard work!"

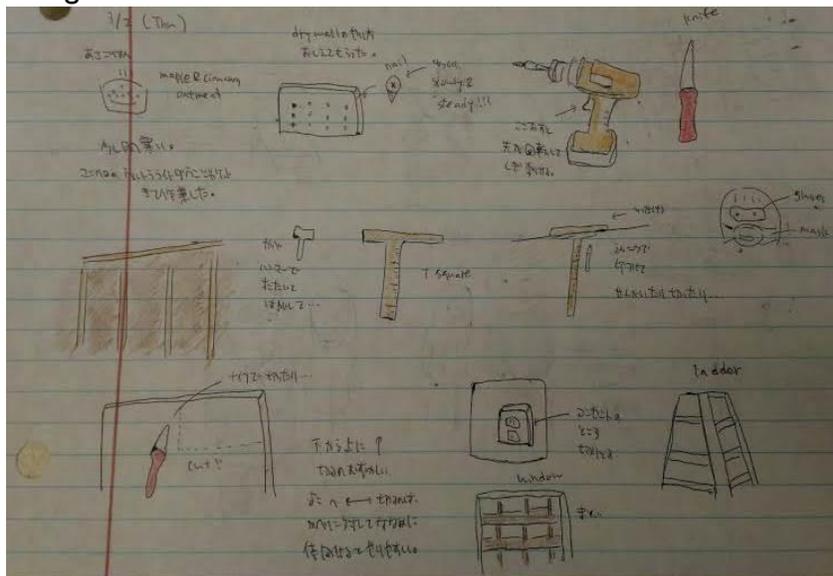
I did not mind, even though the paint on my clothes could not be washed away, because it was a symbol of my first job as a painter and the start of new life for the homeowner.



House painting materials, ceiling fan, paint on my clothing.

Another main job was drywall on the second day. In the morning, a director of Camp Restore taught us how to treat drywall and how to use some tools like a knife and power drill. I also had never experienced drywall. Seeing a bent nail, which was incompletely inserted into a wall, and a limp hole on the drywall that I made, I became worried that I would not be able to

fix it. Compared to other people who were good at drywall, I could not do anything since I was afraid of interrupting their work. While I was standing, time passed slowly. What can I do? What if I break the materials? I should have worked, but I had no confidence to try. Looking at everyone working hard, however, I realized that I had not joined this mission trip to just stand around. The purpose of the trip urged me to act. During the last few hours, finally, I tried cutting a part of drywall which hid a window. Continuously pushing and pulling a knife, I hollowed out the part of the drywall. Since a section was loose, another teammate helped me make it smooth. That day, ducking my head against the chilly wind, I looked back and was filled with the conflict between what I thought was my incompetence and the mission. I was afraid my mistakes would interrupt other's work and damage the house. However, others may have thought that it would be annoying to just stand there without trying anything. I should have asked them what I could do and how to do it. I was not alone. I had teammates to help teach me! We were not professionals of drywall, and the owners knew it. The more times I try a new thing, the better I will be able to do it. The day taught me the importance of relying on others and acting without being afraid of making too many mistakes. As long as I behave by following today's lesson, having stood for hours would not become a useless exercise.



Power drill, knife, T square, cutting drywall, ladder

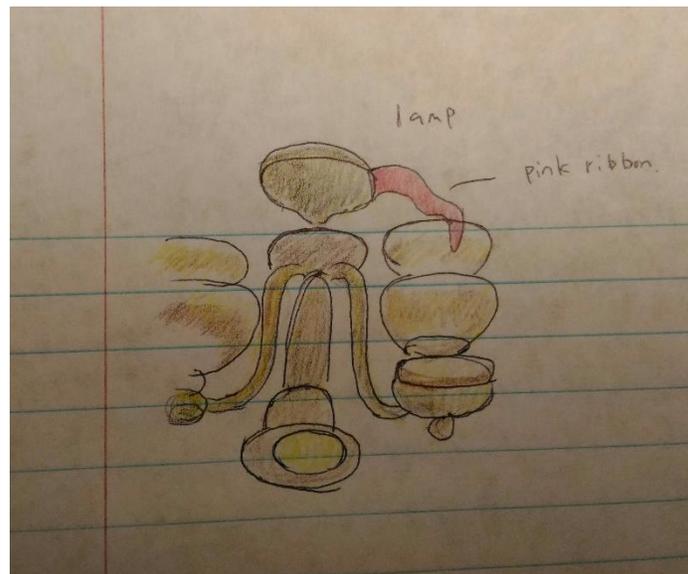
I went to the third house on March 4th. I helped dismantle a hut and take out all nails on the pillars, using a hammer and a nail puller during the daylight. Unlike the day before, the sky had no clouds, and everyone got sunburned as their skin reflected the burning sunshine. In the evening the family, consisting of a father, mother, a daughter, and a son, kindly invited us to dinner. They told us about the flood. Water bottles in the kitchen washed ashore in a remote room. A pink ribbon was caught in a lamp in the dining room. The eight-year old daughter told me, "It was a decoration at my birthday party. My mom forgot to clean it up, but it survived the flood!"

It was not a normal ribbon. Her innocent talking let me imagine how extremely high the water had reached. They had forgotten to remove it, but it must remain. The ribbon was proudly waving, looking over at us. I felt as if it was saying, "I will watch my family, and never forget what happened to us."

The family lives in a trailer, which is much smaller than the house they used to live in. Many essential goods must not have been usable anymore. Children could be shocked by and suffer from the sudden change of their lives. The mother told me, "We cannot live in the same house."

As a Japanese person, it reminds me of the Great East Japan Earthquake which caused a great tsunami and nuclear accidents on March 11, 2011. Nearly 20,000 people passed away, and still 120,000 people have left their hometowns. An uncountable number of people in the world helped sufferers by praying, donating, rescuing people from houses, dismantling rubble, and sending letters to cheer up the victims. Not only people who lived in the area where the earthquake hit, but also every Japanese person, appreciated their help. Whenever I think of the earthquake, I cannot help filling my eyes with tears of remorse and warmth. Now it is my turn to help people. It does not matter if I am a professional or not. Think what people can do. Think what sufferers want. Then act. The mother who told me the story of the disaster said, "Help each other."

People have been told this many times, but it is not until they experience disaster that they will understand how they have to struggle with fear and incompetence against nature, and despair towards life. At the same time, however, they understand the kindness and warmth of people, and there is no border between states, countries, genders, and languages to stop people from helping each other. We are all human beings living on the same planet. We all have hands to give. The pink ribbon will keep shining until all our hands become used to "help each other."



Lamp and a pink ribbon

Mallory Mirabito

A big part of our history is in the photos that are taken in the past and placed into the archives around us. Pictures that are taken in the past are very important and mark a spot in history. Most of the history we hear about today is what wars happened, which king and queen did this, and who bombed who. We don't hear much about the history that is in our backyards. To me this service-learning project was a learning experience that left me thinking about how important it is to digitize our archives. A lot of our history is hidden behind a door that many can't get to because there are just too many photos to find the one that you could be looking for. By digitizing photos from our history, people have an easier way to find photos in our archives. Throughout this semester I was able to take the beginning steps in digitizing the archives in the SUNY Delhi library.

When I first heard that we had to participate in service-learning, I was worried about what I would be doing. The only thing going through my mind at the time was "oh goodness I'm going to be thrown in a room with a bunch of pictures." However, I soon learned that wasn't what was going to happen at all. The first day of service-learning for me was all about learning the steps and precautions you must take when digitizing the photos. Before you can digitize the photos you must wear white gloves, place all pictures into sleeves, and number them. After taking these precautions, you can start describing them and begin digitizing them. Once I learned the precautions and steps you must take, I began placing photos into sleeves and numbering them. Over the days that I went to my service-learning project in the library I started to think deeply about the archives themselves and why it took so long for people to see that our history should be kept nicely. I realized how important it actually is to digitize the pictures of our school's past.

In my eyes our archives are a very important part of New York state history. This service-learning project taught me that it is always nice to see how things used to be. A big part of our history has to do with the people. If there were no archives for these pictures to be kept in, we may never know how things used to be. New York state is where I was born and raised, so I believe that any photo of the past is part of this history. The people that are in these photos could be anyone's ancestors and they are what made this campus. Going through these photos, I came across many different activities that have only become part of history. People used to be so involved on campus and sports were a huge deal. After viewing these pictures, it became clear to me that we aren't as involved and "together as one" as people used to be. Seeing this showed me that people in the past really cared about the things Delhi had to offer.

Overall my experience with service-learning was beneficial in many ways. The thoughts that I had before my first day of service learning were in the end not true. There is so much history in the photos that are kept in archives. To me looking at these pictures showed me how important it is to keep our archives in order and easy to find. Not only is it important that people have easy access to these photos, but it is also important to store them properly. I believe that more people should be involved in digitizing the archives. Although at first things are hard to adjust to, once you start observing the photos things become much easier. Not only is it helpful for the librarians here on campus, but it is also helpful to us. Service-learning takes time, but it is an experience that many should try. Not all service-learning projects have to do with looking at pictures. They can also consist of building websites to show the history of a certain program or participating in activities tied into your topic.

Thank you to all of the community partners, faculty, and staff who help SUNY Delhi's students learn through service.