The Act of Volunteering

I remember I wasn’t too thrilled when I first found out how many hours were required to volunteer for the Legacy Scholarship, but I knew how important continuing my education was and I definitely needed a scholarship. Now that I have forty hours of volunteering experience and a recipient of the Legacy Scholarship, I definitely have a few stories to tell. I began to search for places in town that needed volunteers for the summer. I had heard stories from friends about their volunteering experience and most of their stories seemed to be quite impressing. My friends recommended me to visit Casa de Amigos since they were always welcoming volunteers. Even though I never understood why people volunteer without any type of compensation, little did I know how valuable volunteering was going to be for me.

Before I knew it, day one of volunteering had arrived and I had no clue what to expect or what valuables working for free was going to teach me. Was I going to be slaved away for hours? What type of work does volunteering even include? Will I make any new friends while volunteering? All these questions ran through my mind as I drove to Casa de Amigos. Upon arriving, I was welcomed by a group of volunteers who seemed to be a lot more excited than I was. They must have noticed the puzzled look on my face because one of them told me not to worry. We were taken to a room filled with children who needed help with their reading and math skills. I remember how each child had a smile on their face and ran to greet the volunteers at the door. The children made me feel at ease as I caught myself smiling and greeting them. As time passed, I got to know the children better and we were all comfortable with each other.

Teaching them how to read or how to add was always the highlight of my day. I never imagined how heartwarming this volunteering experience was going to be. The happiness and eagerness that each child brought with them was what kept me on my feet every day. There was always a child eager to begin his or her homework and that taught me the importance of being responsible and caring. I no longer found myself counting down the hours, but instead found myself carried away and even staying longer than I needed. The smiles on the children’s faces
said it all and I wasn’t going to give up on them. Volunteering at Casa de Amigos taught me a variety of things that would have never crossed my mind. I always pictured volunteering as a long and dreadful experience, but if someone had told me how heartwarming it can be, I would have started a long time ago. I found myself writing down goals before walking in the door. My goal each day was to teach a new child how to read or add. Whatever their struggle was, my goal was to make it their strength.

I also had the opportunity of volunteering at Helping Hands where I gained great memories and new friendships. I enjoyed Helping Hands as much as I enjoyed volunteering at Casa de Amigos. My favorite memory was volunteering around Christmas time and wrapping all the gifts for the children so their parents could pick them up right in time before Christmas Eve. I knew that each gift would bring joy to the children and their families so it motivated me even more to wrap as many gifts as I could. Whether it was wrapping gifts, organizing the store, or hanging up clothes I knew it was all for a good cause and that was the best part about being a volunteer.

The children at Casa de Amigos taught me such a great lesson in life and I carry that with me wherever I go. It is not always about money or about yourself. It is about opening up to people, animals, or whatever the cause may be that is in need of your help. I describe to my friends that volunteering is a great heartwarming experience because of its purity of helping strangers out. I have met many strangers during my volunteering experience who I now consider to be some of my best friends. Volunteering unites people and I would advise anyone to give it a try if they haven’t done so yet. I now continue to volunteer at different places around town. I volunteered at Casa de Amigos for five months and at Helping Hands for three months. Despite the tasks I was assigned, I was always on my feet and assisting with anything that needed to be done. Volunteering not only changed my perspectives, but it also changed me as a person.