

Kamille Martin

Service is so important. However, community service even more so. Simply the word "community" put before the word "service" makes the world of a difference. Little did I know the impact of either until my continued involvement with helping out locally. I always tried to get involved with some type of community service whether that be simply cleaning up the park or giving food to the homeless. Upon coming to NEU, I knew that I yearned to get involved with something community-service related. At orientation I learned of a club called NU|ACES. This stands for "Alliance of Civically Engaged Students". The organization's mission interested me so I decided to apply. Soon after I received an email that I was accepted and to look forward to "Welcome Weekend: a weekend full of service". This past weekend exceeded my expectations. I enjoyed not only volunteering in the community, but also learning about the neighborhoods that both touch and surround Northeastern's campus. Saturday began through going to "Family Gym", which has a partnership with the school and contains multiple locations throughout Boston. Our role as facilitators was to play alongside children aged 4-8 and promote exercise/healthy living. The service was unique because I was able to directly interact with others. Everything felt hands-on and I knew I was making an impact. Later that day we learned more about neighborhoods such as Roxbury and the history behind it. On Sunday we participated in another community service event. This included a walk through the park all the way to Forest Hills. As we walked, our task was to take pictures of local objects or places such as a basketball court we came across or a playground. Then, we would upload the photos to a website that helped run the large community park website. It was awesome being able to have such a big influence on the area surrounding Northeastern...I now feel more civically engaged and prepared to successfully impact Boston.

Meeghan Cronin

During NUin I did not have the opportunity to take part in service-learning, so I am excited to experience what it is all about. Throughout high school, I was consistently volunteering. I was always hosting fundraiser sports clinics, raising money for my school, volunteering at our local nursing home, tutoring underclassman, or working with a local farm. Volunteering, although necessary for resumes, has become an important part of my life. I will admit that I only began volunteering because my mom forced me to when I was younger. I started volunteering at the Special Olympics in middle school and often helped with the track events. But as I got older, I found myself starting to look forward to different volunteering opportunities instead of my mom forcing me to sign me up for them. In my opinion, there is no better feeling than being able to make a strong impact on those who are less fortunate than

you. Volunteering can enrich your life by giving you new life experiences, putting you out of your comfort zone, and allowing you to interact with a diverse group of people.

Whenever I have tutored in the past, it has only been for science or history-related subjects. I have never been a writing or English tutor for a student. However, I've had several opportunities to work with elementary school children at a local school in my town as well as several underclassmen in high school. Through volunteering at local schools in high school, I got to develop a stronger relationship with other students and parents in my town. I was often asked to go to youth sports games or babysit during the weekends. By tutoring underclassman, I got to develop stronger relationships with more people throughout my school. I am excited to connect with the local Boston community to develop a stronger understanding of the community here and understand local life better.

Mikayla Coyne

Two weeks of service learning at the BTU have now passed. I really enjoy volunteering at the BTU, as not only do I feel I can make an impact on the writing of young individuals, but it also gives me a different viewpoint on how everyone learns differently. I have now worked with two different students and just between these two students, I see many differences in their learning styles. One person who I was working with last week was very shy and liked to keep her thoughts to herself, while the other person I worked today liked to have my opinion on everything, even her new haircut. I find it very interesting how the personalities of kids can be so different, and this is what I love about volunteering at the BTU, no matter who the person is, there is always a sense of wanting to help them with their writing to the best of your abilities. I think that volunteering at the BTU every week will not only make a difference in the kids that I am working with, but I also think this can make a difference within myself. I think that I can learn a lot from these kids and they can also teach me valuable lessons that I can carry on throughout my learning at Northeastern and in life in general. I think that it is very important to have patience in life and I definitely think that this service learning is helping me with that. It is definitely a nice feeling to take a break in the day and know that you will have a positive influence on people. I feel like many students at Northeastern work so hard without a lot of rewards, so it is nice to feel that sense of reward every week after visiting the BTU.

I am not going to lie, at first when we were told this was a service learning first year writing class, I had no idea of that and I was not too excited. But, now I am very happy that I was placed into this first year writing class. I think that this type of volunteering is something so different than I am used to and I am very excited that I am able to try something new, that so far I am really enjoying. I think that I can now carry over this love for helping others even more to my daily activities and even try my best to carry it on for the rest

of my life. After volunteering now twice at the BTU, I have really been able to enjoy my time there and I can not wait for the more time there to come.

Abby Jimian

Today in service learning tutoring at the BTU I had another positive and eye opening experience. The student I was working with this time was the same student I had been working with last week. When the student told me the work that they had completed in the week since last time I was super happy with their progress. The student had made many steps in progressing their overall work and was very open with talking about their creative process which I appreciated. In fact the student came over to where I was seated because they saw me and was excited to see that they could work with me again in the writers room. For their natural disasters project my student was already done with almost all of the research and had already written three of the subtopics and the paragraphs that went along with it. All we had to do together was finish the last two subtopic paragraphs and add anymore research if needed. The student was very receptive to my feedback and seemed to be on perfect track. The student even allowed me to go through their paragraphs and fix their grammar and spelling errors so that when they started typing their information was clear and coherent.

The student told me that they appreciated the time that they were able to put in with me because of how productive both sessions had been. This was a small affirmation from the student that brought a small smile to my face because I was happy to know that I was being helpful and that the student liked my help. They told me that they felt super productive every time they came in the Writers Room to work with me. The student had mentioned that they struggled with trying to stay focused in the classroom because of the multiple distractions there. However, they told me that being able to work on the paragraphs and research in a more quiet and individualized setting proved to be very helpful to the students ability to do their work well. I think the student also appreciated the open conversation we were able to have about reworking sentences and sentence fluency. Being able to bounce their ideas off of me and see if they made sense before they wrote them down was super helpful when the student was trying to write new paragraphs and ideas without copying. I allowed the student to take a nice break at the end of the session because they had finished writing all of their paragraphs in our session. I know they were appreciative of that because they had said thank you because their brain was completely fried after all the hard work that was put in. I have started to really enjoy working on this project and see the students overall in the writers room get lots of work done in the sessions there. The program there is very good at helping students get their work done but also allowing them to have fun and form relationships with their tutors.

Samantha Rhynard

My second experience with volunteering at the writer's room (EMK) was interesting, and contrasted a lot from my first experience. It seems like by now we should have volunteered more than twice, but because of the vacations the school we work with has been having—as well as our own spring break—so we skipped the first week, and had a week of training, and have been alternating every other week since. It has been an interesting two weeks though, because we have been working with 12th graders. One of the things that I had been concerned about with the volunteering process was that if we were to be tutoring high schoolers, that they would be smarter than us, and/or not want our help with their assignments. Some of this is true—they either don't want our help, or want us to write their essays for them, depending on the person. And while I don't feel outmatched and rendered ineffective by their dizzyingly large intellects, I feel like their equal—which makes it hard to feel justified in asking them to do things that you set out, because you feel like you have no authority over them. And if I too was a senior, I would not be likely to be enthusiastic about doing something someone who is not even a year older than me told me to do. I also forgot to take into account the very important non-motivator that plagues almost all second semester seniors—senioritis. It makes the lack of motivation in the students a lot more explainable and reasonable, as I remember when I too was largely unmotivated second semester of senior year. All of this amounts to the fact that I would feel a lot more comfortable and generally competent around younger children, over whom I actually hold some authority by being older (hopefully).

That being said, so far has been one that while a little awkward at first, has become comfortable after a little reflection. The people I have tutored so far have not been in a stage where the mantra and process of 826 Boston is an effective tool for them, so I have been more of a friend who can offer advice, and give helpful pointers from time to time. I will say that I am very proud of having brought up the idea that a draft did not have to start at the beginning, and could be an outline with the general gist of a body paragraph or two, and was met by enthusiasm and "Oh! I'd never thought to do that before. That's smart!" comments to the students I was tutoring this past week. So while I was a little bit uncomfortable at first with the idea of tutoring 12th graders, I have adapted to the interesting situation, and can see benefit coming from both ends—the students get help with their writing, as well as my interpersonal relation skills improving.