

My Service Learning Experience with 826 Boston

April 27, 2021

By Riley Flores



826 Boston is a nonprofit youth writing and publishing organization that empowers traditionally underserved middle school and high school-aged students. 826 helps students in Boston find their voices, tell their stories, and work on communication skills. These are skills that will carry through to wherever their lives may take them in the future. 826 is founded on the idea that one-on-one assistance can improve learning by

My experience volunteering at [826 Boston](#) was a very impactful experience. I worked as a peer tutor for mostly 8th grade writing students. I helped students outline and plan essays as well as edit drafts. I typically did not work with the same students because I worked in multiple different classrooms and with different age groups. I learned how to give critiques effectively and supportively while still allowing the student to make their own creative decisions. I learned a lot about myself as well, as I had to put myself back into a middle schooler's shoes. I remember how it felt to be that age and go to a big, underfunded public school. I realized that sometimes, students need some extra support to feel confident in what they are doing. Creative expression is always a bit intimidating but having someone who is supportive to guide you through it is extremely beneficial. Addressing the issue of underserved public-school populations seems incredibly vital especially during this turbulent time. Students need stability, support, and motivation more than ever. 826 Boston found a way to continue its mission despite these unforeseen circumstances. Nonprofit organizations and social programs are exceedingly important especially during this time of grief, loneliness, uncertainty, and drastic change.

My Service Learning Experience with 826 Boston

Lack of funding for public education is a huge issue that much of the US is facing. Public schools, especially in underserved neighborhoods, tend to not have the resources private schools and public schools in more wealthy neighborhoods afford. This leads to a gap in quality of education based on socioeconomic status. Programs like 826 Boston aim to bridge that gap by giving students the resources and attention they should be getting anyway.

826 is founded on the idea that one-on-one assistance can improve learning by incredible amounts. Often, public school teachers are overworked and have an enormous number of students to work with and look after. Different students also have different needs and when overworked, it may be hard for professors to meet those needs on a one-on-one level. Working with a peer tutor who is completely fresh and unbiased does wonders for a student who may be stuck in a rut. When a student works with a peer tutor, they typically also get a fresh perspective on whatever material it is they are working on.

826 Boston works to create safe and productive learning environments where students can learn to express themselves through writing. A good background in writing is a valuable and transferable skill that can be extremely useful for many aspects of life including creative expression, and can even be a therapeutic outlet for many.

During a crisis like the one we are experiencing now, students should feel fulfilled by their education. They should feel as though their personal needs are being met and should feel supported by their school system when at times, their home situation isn't supportive. I'm extremely grateful for the opportunity to work with an organization like 826. I learned a lot about myself, the community, the

teachers, and the students I worked with. Young students should feel confident in their individual voice and should feel empowered to use it.