

RIDDC/JROTC - Service Learning Project Portfolio Assessment/Essay

There are many developmental disorders in the world... (for examples) There is ADD, ADHD, frontal lobe disorder, cerebral palsy, blindness, Down Syndrome; ...The one I know a little bit about is frontal lobe disorder. I know about it because a (fellow) explained to me what happened when he was in a car accident. He told me it affects his life in general and the people around him. He couldn't remember anything that happened to him after the accident, and he (Now) has a problem when he speaks because he says anything that comes to mind.

Three meaningful functions (affected for him) are: He can't control what he says, meaning sometimes he would say things that would hurt his family and friends and even to offend the opposite sex? (sic); He can't remember anything he has to do. They have to have notes around so he can remember what he has to do...He writes notes for the work he has to do at home, work or even school. Another effect is that he can't be organized. He always has a mess around his house and his job and it is hard for him to keep up with the cleaning. He has other people to keep him organized. The last effect I know about is that he can't do more than one activity at once because his brain is not that fast anymore like it is supposed to be.

I helped him until he started to remember a little bit. He started to remember 6 to 7 names and what happened to him. We helped him by showing him how to hold back with "wrongful"(ed.) words that will hurt someone he cares for. When I helped him I finally believed I did do something for someone beside myself. I helped him by being his friend and showing him I cared about him. I would be his long-term friend and he would feel that (he) has someone who cares for him.

My perceptions and feelings have changed in a big way (as a result of knowing this person), and for the best for me. I first thought that (a person with) frontal lobe disorder was just a person that was slow and dumb. But now I know why they are different and why they want to feel just like we do. They want people to treat them like a human being. I believe now I would respect anyone with a disorder because now I know that it is wrong to judge a person with a disorder without knowing him or her from the inside. (Now) I would change by helping them in any way I can. I would give them the chance to feel like a real person and show them that they are equal to me and they can live like a normal person when they are with me.

Students who get to know someone with a disability will get a changed point of view, and the student would be a better person that they were before, with a better feeling for themselves and somebody else.

The first academic area where we worked was psychology because we sat with him and helped him show us what things bothered him ... We helped him with trying to slow down the things coming out of his mouth that would hurt his family. He helped me change the way I act with people with (disabilities) and other people as well...the second ("academic" area we worked on) was responsibility because he relies on us to help him learn new things like we helped him learn words he didn't know or remember. He also gave me a chance to make him smile. It was a great responsibility to keep (him) happy and make him feel like he is a real person.

The way I feel about all this is like something I have never felt before. I never knew what it was like to help (anyone) but myself and now I know and feel it was all for the best and it was a good cause. So when people ask me what it is like working with someone with a disorder I am going to tell them "it's like working with a normal person". So when they ask me why I did this I will also tell them because everyone always needs someone to be a friend. So now I am going to leave this program and school with a new way of looking at things and a new way of life. I am proud to be in a program like this to learn how to have a new way to look at things and how to treat people with proper respect.

Joshua Diaz
With Kathleen Fresher-Samways, ed.