My Semester of Service at the Brunner Literacy Center

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Fitz Center for Leadership in Community

Promoting Literacy in Dayton
Fitz Center Semester of Service at the Brunner Literacy Center

Student Overview
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Spring 2018
International Studies

Semester of Service
The Fitz Center’s Semester of Service program offers students the opportunity to serve for a non-profit in the Dayton area in order to grow as lifelong servant leaders. I participated in the program during the 2018 Spring Semester.

Brunner Literacy Center
The Brunner Literacy Center is a nonprofit located in the Trotwood area. The Brunner Literacy Center is a welcoming place for adults to reach their educational dreams. The BLC aims to empower adults to reach their literacy potential. The Center offers a variety of programs, including Adult Basic Education (ABE), GED prep, License prep, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, and Continuing Education (CE), and help preparing for students wanting to pass their citizenship test.

The Need
More than thirty million adults in the United States read below a fourth grade level. In our part of Ohio, this translates to an estimated 60,000 adults in need of literacy assistance.

Adults with low literacy struggle to:
- Find employment.
- Understand medical instructions or government documents.
- Participate in community events.
- Understand rental agreements, loan documents, etc.
- Help their children with their homework.
- Access help and support when they need it.

The BLC Approach
Founded in 2011 by two retired educators who saw a need in their immediate neighborhood, the BLC has helped nearly 1,500 adults improve their reading, writing, math and English language skills. When adults take steps to improve their literacy, the benefits impact not just the individual, but their family and the entire community. The Brunner Literacy Center creates a lasting change in the community we serve. Increasing literacy rates has been proven to lower crime and poverty. Literacy runs in the family, and by educating parents we pave the way for educated future generations and community leaders. The Brunner Literacy Center encourages our students to engage in their communities, and makes this possible by instilling a sense of confidence within them that is oftentimes absent in those who struggle with low literacy. When citizens are educated, they can be confident in their ability to make real changes in their community, lead initiatives, and support local projects.

Responsibilities
Working at the Brunner Literacy Center allowed me to gain insight into the financial, marketing, and day-to-day running of a nonprofit. My main role was in the BLC’s communications department. I helped run the Facebook page, aided in writing monthly bulletins, and wrote press releases. I also assisted in development, writing multiple donation request letters and grant proposals.

Some of my graphic work:

Tutoring
Through a dedicated group of 150 volunteer tutors, The BLC provides one-on-one tutoring and educational support to adults who did not succeed in traditional K-12 education the first time around. For many of our students, their work with a tutor is the first time anyone has shown a true interest in their learning.

I had the opportunity to tutor three students during my time at the Brunner Literacy Center. I worked with one woman from the Dayton area on her reading and writing skills, a woman from the Dominican Republic on her English speaking skills, and a man from Sudan on his English reading and writing skills.

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