Service Learning: The Importance of Civic Engagement

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A Social Justice Learning and Living Cohort Community Project

Abstract
The Build Communities for Social Justice LLC strives to address social justice issues in the city of Dayton as well as issues on a larger scale. One of the many issues the LLC focused on this year was Literacy. There is a large percentage of members of the greater Dayton community who can’t read and need help. In the past, the Miami Valley Literacy Council was the main resource to helping these people in the community learn how to read, and work with adults to get their GED, and worked with other organizations in the community such as Project Read. This past year, the Miami Valley Literacy Council closed, thus creating a bigger need for help improving literacy in the Dayton area. This semester, I have been working with Project Read, and was assigned through them to help tutor kids at Westminster Presbyterian Church in downtown Dayton. I have been specifically working with a kid named D’Angelo and helping him with his math and reading skills. While he is currently in 7th grade, both his math and reading scores are not at a 7th grade level. I meet with him every Wednesday for an hour, and we work on various math and reading concepts.

2012 Service Learning Experience

Expectations
I expected that my student would have a poor reading level.
I expected that he would be excited to be receiving tutoring.
I also expected that the kids would all be members of Westminster Church.

Outcomes
My student actually had a good reading level but could not comprehend basic math concepts.
D’Angelo was not excited for me to work with him at first due to issues at school.
Therefore, part of my tutoring has been just developing a friendship with D’Angelo and getting him to feel more comfortable opening up about what is going on during school.
I learned that all of the kids are from E.J. Brown School, and while the tutors are from all over, a lot of them are members of Westminster Church.

Service Learning Mission
Westminster Presbyterian Church:
We are committed to sharing our love of God by focusing on education as an integral part of our mission beyond the church.