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Personal Reflections from ePortfolio: AHRC New York City

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Robert Salloum

My Biography: What I am Bringing to AHRC New York City

I plan to bring to AHRC New York City is hard work and determination. I am very motivated to get our task done and to work with the kids of AHRC. Although I haven't done much community service related to students with disabilities, I am very open to this new opportunity. While I was in high school, I volunteered at a national hockey tournament in Wayne, NJ as a security guard. This job was very demanding because we were required to be there on time at many different hours of the day. Our shifts were broken up into different sections of the day so paying attention to detail was the key to success in this volunteer job. I will bring that responsibility to AHRC and plan on giving 110% to the students in the program.

Me



usually gets during the birth of his child, Richard's memories are occupied with worry, uncertainty, and fear. After his birth, Tom spent two weeks in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit before Richard was able to take him home. Nine months later, Tom was diagnosed with cerebral palsy; a condition when the parts of Tom's brain responsible for orchestrating fine motor skills have died from lack of oxygen during his birth. After reading this section of the book, it opened my eyes to the fact that not every disabled person is pre-determined to have a disability before their birth; it could be a single or series of events that causes one disabled person to encounter their disability or disabilities.

As a result, Tom now cannot speak and needs a wheelchair to get around. After opening my mind and realizing how bad other disabled people have it, I'm happy to know that my student, Gabriel, is a very intelligent and highly functioning individual with a disability. Although Gabriel's condition is not an ideal one for anyone, it makes me happy to know that he doesn't have it as bad as others because it would be a great waste of intelligence, talent, and potential if Gabriel were unable to express himself through words and actions, like I've seen him do so well during the period that I've worked with him.

It is very obvious that Richard is unbelievably happy and proud of his son, no matter what condition he is in. In Richard's segment "Foreword", he expresses that people might think that a birth like this brings moments of sadness; but what people don't know is that it brings greater moment of joy. I could only imagine how happy Gabriel's parents are to know that their son is a highly functioning student with a disability. I assume that his parents, friends, and family recognize his progress, brightness, and potential. Every parent of a child with a disability must be tremendously proud of their children for what they have been through throughout their lives.

In conclusion, DisabilityLand by Alan Brightman is a book that shows what it's like to live with a disability. It gives the audience a feeling for what a disabled person and their families go through on an everyday basis. This book is a great tool for an average person to use to understand the lives of individuals with disabilities. Richard Ellenson makes it very easy for the readers to understand just one example of how students with disabilities affect not only themselves, but also their families. Richard's experience with Tom's birth was a terrible one, but it has brought Richard closer to his son. Richard appreciates his son and loves his son no matter the condition he's in. My AHRC partner, Gabriel, is a bright student. I'm happy to say that he does not have it as bad as some other disabled children do. He is fully functional and responsive to his surroundings. He has his own interests and hobbies. Just like Richard gets joy and love out of his son Tom, I'm sure that Gabriel's parents could not be more proud of their son for everything he's been able to do so far in his 16 years of existence. He has a bright future and has a lot of potential. There is no doubt in my mind that Gabriel will be a successful man in his later years.

My Final Reflections Journal on Impacts of Semester

Four months ago, I thought I was walking into just another CIS class, I didn't realize that I was walking into a life changing experience. Working with AHRC New York City and their students with disabilities was a privilege. The amount this class opened up my awareness about individuals with disabilities is unbelievable. It really made me realize the completely different world that they live in and the different things they have to deal with on a daily basis. After working hands on with an individual with a disability, it changed my life. The fact that I single handedly had a direct impact on a child's life for the better really makes me happy.

Gabriel my AHRC New York City student, is an amazing individual and a great partner to work with during the semester. He's a very bright individual and has a lot of potential, more potential than most people probably think he has. He is very intelligent and he is very aware and responsive. Gabriel and I had a very healthy and exciting friendship. The reason I say "friendship" is because towards the latter stages of the semester, Gabriel and I become more of friends rather than just partners. It was great to see. Gabriel and I both wanted to be in class together rather than us both just "having" to be there. The fact that Gabriel and I became really good pals made both our jobs very easy for each other and also made us have a lot of fun while also doing productive work.

During the course of the semester, Gabriel and I found out that we have a lot of things in common. We share favorite music artists, favorite NFL team (New York Giants), and some favorite movies. I came to the realization of this in two ways; the first was the small talk Gabriel and I would have together during the duration of our two-hour classes, and also through the PowerPoint presentation Gabriel and I would work on during class. The project about Gabriel helped me tremendously with getting to know him and understanding his likings. Gabriel told me everything to put on there; I rarely had to make a suggestion to him. I love to see that Gabriel has a passion for different things. He loves Dragon-Ball Z and knows every aspect of the show and their movies. He also follows Will Smith and loves all his movies and music. In my opinion, Gabriel's largest passion is working out and staying healthy. Every time Gabriel would come to Pace, he would always look forward to working out and getting stronger in the gym. He loves going to the gym to work out his abs, legs, and arms. Those are just a few of Gabriel's passions. He has many of them that keep him happy and it's a great thing to see.

Personally, this class has been a great overall experience for me. It has made me more aware about persons with disabilities and how their lives are. Also, this class provided me with opportunities I never would have had the chance to do normally. One example would be going to the AHRC Adult Day services center. That was something that I never thought existed. It's great to see there are facilities of that nature to help adults with disabilities. Another example would be going to the Natural History Museum. Our visit to the museum was the first time I was ever there, and it's been something I have wanted to do for a while. I probably was more excited than some of the AHRC students about the visit to the museum. All in all, this class was amazing and it is something that I will never forget.



Certificate of Service Learning Participation

This is to certify that

Robert Salloum

*In recognition of your exceptional participation in the
AHRC New York City and PACE University Partnership*

Spring Semester 2012

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