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# Personal Reflections from ePortfolio: AHRC New York City

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by [Juliette Nieves](#)



## My Biography: What I Am Bringing to AHRC New York City

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Hi I'm Juliette. I'm a sophomore at Pace studying Commercial Dance. My favorite style is hip hop. I'm currently injured, but I'm still taking classes to learn about the wellness of a dancer and I'm going to be watching a lot of dance videos. In High school I didn't do much community service. I just remembering I helped clean a preschool, and helped out at a clothes drive for the school. I'm very interested anything to do with the arts like music, dance and theater: as well as the other type of art like painting, drawing and mosaics. So basically I will be a good partner for anyone who wants to do something creative. I have training in all of these interests that I have; so I definitely can help any student pursue an artistic project. I also love people. I'm very friendly and love to make new friends. So I'll have fun meeting everyone.

## My Biography in Graphic Representation (Optional)

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## Blog (and News Story) of 2/12/13

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I enjoyed my time with Candice today. I didn't know what to expect when I first met her, but I think we will make good friends. She seemed shy at first. Asking her the questions helped to start a conversation with her. When she saw my sheet she tried to answer all of them. She lives with her mom in Brooklyn. When she goes on vacation she goes to Sheepshead Bay which is also in Brooklyn. One of her favorite things to do is listen to music on the radio. Ha ha she even looked up songs from her favorite station, 107.5, on youtube. She wanted to find a way to download them to her cute panda usb attached to a necklace around her neck. At one point she even lost the bottom of it. So I had to go searching for it during the presentations. I found it no worries. Also, as I found out just by watching her was her interest in Mafia shows. She kept trying to find them on youtube. She also really enjoys *Family Guy* and *Everybody Hates Chris*. While she was looking up all these videos and music on the computer, I realized she is really good with technology. She was finding music and downloading it in ways I didn't know existed. I remember her mentioning to me that she would like to be a DJ or an engineer when she got older. And looking at the way she handles technology, I think she could be good at either of those jobs. I believe an engineer would have to use the computer to draft outlines. I think she even said she wants to make a subway train. So she could make a draft of that. Then as a DJ she'd have to know how to mix and download music. I know she knows how to obtain music. So it wouldn't surprise me if she knows how to mix or that she could pick it up fast.

### **Blog:**

Candice wasn't interested in traveling to anywhere outside of New York. So I looked up JFK Airport in Queens to see if it accommodated people with disability. I checked every section on that website, and the only accommodations they had were for those in wheel chairs and couldn't walk too much. Though while searching the site <http://www.panynj.gov/airports/jfk.html>, the site for JFK; I remember reading in the article that the airlines: American Airlines, Jet Blue, United Airlines, Frontier, Southwest, Continental, AirTran had programs for disabled people. So after I exhausted looking for some tab mentioning helping people with disabilities, I found what Airlines fly to JFK. The airlines Jet Blue, United Airways, and American Airlines fly to JFK. Under the tab Airport Guide it has a subsection for the Airlines. Then if you click the links they have to the airlines you can get to the airlines website. Once you are on that website if you search under travel information, for example on the American Airlines website, you can find their accommodations for people with a wide range of disabilities including Autism. It mentions like in the article that they help you plan your flight. But it takes a lot of website surfing to find the accommodations, but not for the particular airport JFK, only some of the airlines that fly there. And if someone hadn't read the article *Testing Autism and Air Travel* you wouldn't really think to search the airlines website, not the airport website, for service for an individual with a disability.

## Blog (and News Story) of 2/19/13

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**Blog:** The presentation at AHRC opened my eyes more to not only what our class can do for our partners, but also how AHRC improves the lives of all those that employ their services. Julia, an employee of AHRC, explained to us that the options for those with disabilities after high school are very limited. Individuals without disabilities can choose to go to college, work, and travel or join the army after graduating high school. But those with disabilities don't have that much choice. For some reason I never realized or maybe thought about how open our future is versus that of one of the high school students we work with. That makes me sad. But what the pace students can do with their partners is help establish confidence in what our partners are good at. We can help them improve on their abilities as well as help them acquire some social skills that will greatly help them in the future. And once they graduate, as Julia explained, AHRC has post-graduate programs to help them achieve their potential. They have a work program where they try to find jobs for those with disabilities or even create jobs for them. There are two colleges they work with that allow individuals helped by AHRC attend their classes. Even at the day center we visited for class, they helped to develop the potential of all those that go there. The center does this by making groups for them that focus on fostering their special abilities. I enjoyed listening to the two ladies who receive services from AHRC about their experience with the organization. They seemed so happy to be a part of AHRC. Gilda for instance enjoys her arts and crafts at the center and she even makes the newsletter for upcoming events for the center as well. She has been there almost since AHRC was founded. And according to her she has been living a happy satisfying life being a part of this organization.

### **Part 2:**

The article "Beauty Queen with Autism Makes Miss America History" was very encouraging for people with disabilities. It highlighted Montana's recent Miss Montana, Alexis Wineman, who has Autism. It did not say in the article where Alexis fell on the spectrum, but it is still quite impressive for someone like her who has the disorder to make it the Miss America pageant. It is impressive because people with Autism lack a certain amount of social intelligence; yet Alexis made it to the Miss America pageant which requires a lot of social intelligence. She overcame her disability to get that far. Not only did she make it to the pageant, but she was America's number one choice to put into the semifinals. This made perfect sense to Art McMaster, CEO of the Miss America organization, he said this about her, "It just seemed that anyone Alexis came into contact with just fell in love with her. She was the talk of Las Vegas and she really is a special young lady." Even though she didn't make it past the top 16 she continues to use her position as Miss Montana to spread awareness about the disorder.

One of the more concerning articles on the site was "State Challenges School Using Shock Therapy". This story is discouraging for individuals with disabilities. Yes, the article is exposing the "torture" like therapy that the Rotenberg Center in order to stop it. But the mere fact that this type of treatment is still administered today is appalling. According to the article, "The Canton, Mass. facility, which serves children and adults with developmental disabilities and those with behavioral and emotional problems, is believed to be the only one in the country using electric shocks to address behavior issues." The reason why the center can still administer the shock therapy is because they have an outdated court order allowing the facility to use it. It is thirty years later, the court order was made in the 1980s, and the court order is still in effect. What is even scarier, in my opinion, is that the center has some supporters of the treatment. Those supporters are some of the family members of those getting therapy as well as former patients. Though I'm not quite sure what to make of a few of the former patients that say the treatment is effective. I don't think former patients are credible sources because electroshock therapy harms the brain. Mha.org, Mental Health America, had this to say about shock therapy, "Because of the concern about permanent memory loss and confusion related to ECT treatment, some researchers recommend that the treatment only be used as a last resort." If a side effect of this therapy is memory loss how can a former patient be a credible supporter when they could possibly not even remember what they were like before the therapy?

"Inclusion The Default at Innovative School" was a refreshing story about a school, for those with disabilities, tailoring education around the individual. This program is very encouraging for those with disabilities. By helping the students strengthen their unique abilities, students can really feel a sense of purpose: that they have something special they can offer the world. This program is quite different from a regular school. In most schools all students have to take the same subjects no matter what their aptitude is for any given subject. But at this school, instead of forcing a subject on them that they will struggle with, it can foster success by focusing on what a child can not only do but improve and excel at.

Sources: <http://www.disabilityscoop.com/>

<http://www.nmha.org/go/information/get-info/treatment/electroconvulsive-therapy-ect>

### Blog (and News Story) of 3/12/13

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Dear Senator Carlucci,

It has come to my attention that Governor Cuomo suggested a concerning \$120 million cut to the funding for individuals with disabilities in the state of New York. I understand that the state must cut back to pay for the \$500 million missing in the budget, but by taking an alarming amount from those who need help the most is an unethical approach. I personally know individuals receiving services through New York City's own AHRC, the city's non-profit organization servicing those with disabilities. In my class at Pace University, my classmates and I partner with AHRC's high school students to create projects using different technologies. The students we work with have autism. Their lives are vastly different than that of my fellow classmates including myself. Through our weekly readings, interactions with the students, and visiting AHRC's downtown center I have come to realize the hardships not only they, but all those with disabilities face. They have far fewer choices than those who are not afflicted with a cognitive or debilitating illness. Those in the middle of the spectrum and higher of autism cannot go to college unless it's one of the few community colleges that allow it, less people want to hire them, and some if not most cannot even travel on the subway. But through AHRC they receive services that better their lives and give them choices they never thought they could have. AHRC helped partner with a few of the community colleges in the city to allow for those with disabilities to attend college. The organization has an employment service program where they find work for individuals with disabilities who otherwise wouldn't be working. There is even an independent travel program that teaches those with disabilities how to be independent and travel on the subway or bus alone. AHRC along with many other organizations helping the disabled are vital to the lives of those with disabilities. Cutting funding from these programs will yet again cut down on the few choices that those with disabilities do have.

Instead, the state should cut money from frivolous projects, from projects that affect those more comfortable in life, and or from heavily funded subject areas. Healthy financially stable individuals, and areas that are heavily funded, like technology, can afford some cuts. I researched where some of funding for New York State went to. I found the site [www.ny.gov](http://www.ny.gov) and found some of the projects funded in N.Y. As I said before I mentioned that technology projects are heavily funded. I saw that 6 out of the 15 projects given money are related to the advancement of technology, link to the funding of which I am referring: <http://www.nysegov.com/citGuide.cfm?superCat=102&cat=429&content=main>. I know that you are well aware of where funding goes in New York. It's your job to know. I just wanted to give you an example of where money could be cut.

I am one among many who want to stop this cut in its tracks. There is a petition on causes.com that has almost hit its goal of 10,000 signatures which I have signed. Here is a link: [http://www.causes.com/actions/1735662-no-more-cuts-to-disability-services?query=No+More+Cuts+to+Disability+Services&rank=0&utm\\_campaign=search](http://www.causes.com/actions/1735662-no-more-cuts-to-disability-services?query=No+More+Cuts+to+Disability+Services&rank=0&utm_campaign=search). I am sure there are many more besides the nearly 10,000 people that have signed this document who want to stop this cut as well.

I hope you agree with my letter that I have sent you. Funding should not be cut for those with disabilities because it is vital to the lives of those with few choices, there are plenty of other projects that could have money cut from, and this cut is not favored by thousands of New Yorkers. Please join our movement to protect the services so many with disabilities count on.

Thank you for reading,

Juliette Nieves

### **Blog:**

Today I had a moment of reconsidering the topic that I want to explore for Kandice and I's project. I still want to incorporate the idea of crime fighting, but maybe I want to do a broader subject like growing up. She associates growing up with adult content and other things. She seems to be fascinated with some of her favorite stars growing up. Today we watched videos about the actresses that play two of the sisters on Full House and how they grew up. Then we watched videos on the Olsen twins as well. We watched their videos as kids and then some as adults. I asked her what she thought about changing the idea, but she didn't seem sure on what we should do. So I'm on the fence of what to do. I will think about it more over this week.

Today we couldn't do much. It was rainy outside so we had to stay inside. We still had fun watching videos together and chatting. At one point we got on the subject of pizza and she said she liked Domino pizza. So I thought it may be a cool idea to go there with some of the students and Martin maybe next week. She seemed to want to do that. There is a Domino's pizza on Church Street that is like 5 minutes away. The address is 181 Church Street. What do you think?

### **Blog (and News Story) of 4/9/13**

I feel the Cohen article "Why Are Autism Spectrum Conditions more Prevalent in Males?" at times can be hard to follow. It tries to fit the findings of several studies into a seven page paper. So I believe certain theories like "Reduced Autosomal Penetrance in Females?"(5) Should have been explained more in-depth. I do not quite understand the theory from reading the article. The article barely explained it compared to the explanations of the Chromosomal theories or Fetal Testosterone; it was easier to understand the arguments made for the theories better explained. It felt as though the paper had a bias toward the Fetal Testosterone Theory. Flaws with the chromosomal and autosomal theories were acknowledged while there wasn't much talk if any of what could be wrong with the Fetal Testosterone Theory. In my personal opinion, I think the X Chromosomal Theory seems the most likely one or a combination of the chromosomal X and Fetal Testosterone theories. Autism affects both males and females: so the Y Chromosomal theory doesn't make any sense because women don't have that chromosome. But maybe they mean that the Y Chromosome Theory is what makes autism in boys that much worse than girls, not what causes it entirely; they should have explained that better.

Overall, the content of this article was well researched. There are many facts and tests done to show how each theory might work. For instance, there is table 2 showing "the psychological evidence for the extreme Male Brain EMB theory". It shows how women have higher social aptitudes than men. There are a few other tables in the paper and many pieces of data within the written portion of the article. But how the information was presented at times was incomprehensible.

### **Blog:**

Today I finally figured out our topic: growing up through the different TV shows she watches. Yes! Finally! The fun part about today was that we went to Dominos. It was a perfect day to go on a walk. The sun was shining, there was a nice breeze, and we went with a big group from the class. Kandice had been waiting to go on this adventure for a few weeks. I could see how much she was enjoying it. She smiled a lot and was more talkative. The whole group was alive with energy too. We all took pictures as we walked along. I accidentally navigated the group to Dominos using the long way. But it felt nice to go on a long walk and enjoy the day. We figured out how to make the trip shorter when we came back though. I think we didn't really need to bring Martin with us. Everyone was really well behaved and courteous on the busy streets of New York.

### **Blog (and News Story) of 4/16/13**

*Autism and The Technical Mind* was more compressible than the previous week's reading. Its use of language and focus rivaled that of the previous article. I understood the flow of thought: that those with technical minds who mate are more likely to have autistic children than the general population. There were less technical terms allowing for a broader audience to understand it. You didn't have to be a scientist to get the concept. Also, the paper developed one, maybe two theories, instead of trying to describe four or five theories in one



paper. This article showed that research on one narrow topic is better than the confusion created by a large quantity of theories discussed in one paper.

However, this week's article lacked the quality of research that last week's article had. There were fewer statistics in this paper. Even the opening statistic was misleading. It stated that 12.5 percent of autistic children had engineers as father's verse 5 percent of children without autism at father's that were engineers. It sounds like a revealing percentage at first, but what happened to the other 87.5 percent a fathers with autistic children? It could be that 76 percent of fathers whose kids had autism were in fact artists. Yes, that is a huge hyperbole, but the audience needs to have more information to make an informed decision if they believe the study or not. But, the later statistic comparing the three cities was better informed.

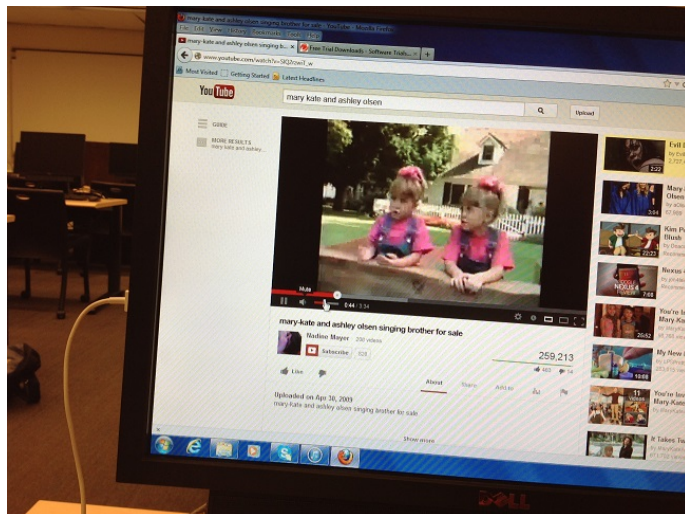
Even though the article could have had better statistics in it, I believed the articles theory. I grew up with an example of the technical couple that was discussed in the paper. My friend from elementary school had siblings with autism, and both her parents were engineers. So I grew up with the theory of those with technical minds have a higher chance of having children with autism.

## Blog

Today's class was a little stressful. I wanted to get started really putting the entire project together, but someone else brought our iPad outside. So I couldn't download some of the movies and pictures until much later in the class when the iPad was returned to us. I'm better at creating like a mini outline of where I should place things when I have all my materials together at once. So it threw me off a little.

Instead, I started to focus on other aspects of the project. I asked Kandice to send me some of her favorite music for the slides because she is really into hip hop music. Then I downloaded the pictures from my iPod to the computer. I asked Kandice her opinion on some of the ideas I had for pairing certain pictures with captions.

Kandice was very eager to help me with the project. She listened attentively when I asked her guided questions about her future. For example, I asked her if she wanted to be a DJ because I knew Yerri from AHRC was also a DJ. I knew that type of job is something she could actually get verses a job as an engineer. She also, tried to give input on what pictures she liked best.



## My Mid-Term Reflection Journal on [Book] *Miracle Boy* and Project

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Kandice and I cared about each other when we first met, but our relationship was more obligatory than a deep relationship: thus resembling the attendant/client relationship model described in the book *Miracle Boy*. But over these past few months our bond has grown/progressed to a budding friendship. We both progressed as people as we grew closer. First of all, any preconceived ignorant notions I had about individuals with Autism were dispelled the first day I met Kandice: as a result I became more educated about Autism. Then Kandice, motivated by a need to speak up and our growing friendship became a better communicator. As she began to become more extroverted, I then challenged her to evaluate why she thinks the way she does about a certain subject. Her answer made her more aware of her motives. Over time, I became more invested in wanting to help her through making a project that would assist her growth as a person and guide her to a satisfying future. She too wanted to care/help me in class thus becoming a more caring person. We've both become better people due to our maturing friendship.

Before I met Kandice I had a certain image in mind of what a typical individual with Autism would be like. The first few minutes I knew her, she was very quiet and hesitant to interact with me. She acted in one of the ways I thought an average Autistic would act. But as the class progressed that day, she began to surprise me. She saw my sheet of questions and specifically made sure to answer all of them. That moment marked the first time she showed she was more than this shy girl I initially met. Once we were done with that sheet, she started talking about her boyfriend. She even told me she had a boyfriend before the current one: again another unexpected piece of information. At first, I thought I was hearing things. Now I feel stupid that I didn't think that was a possible conversation we'd have. Ben Mattlin in *Miracle Boy* actually addresses this wrong idea of people with disabilities are "basically considered sexless. Disqualified before they try" (Mattlin 104). The doctors that handled him as a baby thought he would never have a relationship, and many girls in college never saw him as dating material. My own thoughts weren't so extreme. I thought she'd one day in the future have a relationship, but it surprised me that she had the emotional maturity/ social intelligence to start and maintain relationships now. Autism is in fact a cognitive disorder that affects your social intelligence. Now I know my thinking was misinformed, wrong. Not only does Kandice have a relationship, but one day she will be married like Ben. Needless to say the information in my brain regarding those with Autism has now been thoroughly updated.

Although, Kandice's shyness made our conversations awkward/stilted at first, she learned how to communicate with me over the semester. At first, she rarely volunteered to talk on her own. So our first conversation was a little frustrating for me. As I said before she did then proceed to answer all the questions on our sheet, and then talk about her boyfriend. Those were welcome moments of relief. But the next class again our conversation had that awkwardness about it. I'd ask her questions. What do you like to do for fun? Why do you keep watching these crime shows on youtube? What type of hip hop music do you like? She'd answer and have a little more to say about the subject, but it wasn't much. Finally, I believe the day we first got to use the Ipads she started to volunteer information on her own. Her excitement motivated her to ask to go to the different parts of the gym and go to the exercise machine room or the stretching room. She was beginning to learn to ask for what she wanted instead of staying silent. Speaking up for yourself, for your needs, and your wants was a huge theme in *Miracle Boy*. It's true what Ben's mom said "people aren't mind readers. You have to speak up" (Mattlin 6). So since she wanted to go to all these places, she realized she needed to speak to me **on her own** to go there. As a result, she began to speak on her own more. There is a second reason for her new found voice as well. We were starting to become friends. Once you share some jokes in an exercise room and start to bond over girly photos, you know a friendship is starting. Right after the gym she wanted to show me all these videos she liked so much. She started to demand I watch these videos with her because she wanted to share them with me. Ever since then she gets happier to see me. When she sees me she greets me by my name instead of not saying anything. Her persistence at watching her favorite videos and hoping I like them grows each time I see her. Now it's much easier to have a pleasant conversation that she contributes to.

As she became more extraverted I started to ask more insightful questions because I wanted to learn why she thought in certain ways. Subsequently, her answers helped her become more introspective. For example, she enjoys watching adult content shows like crime shows or puppets that swear words. I found this strange. I knew that people with Autism get obsessed with certain subjects, shows, or people. But I didn't understand why these shows fascinated her so much. So I asked what attracted her to these shows. At first, she had to think about it. But then she replied that these shows contain adult content which is a sign of her growing up. From my question she learned something new about herself, and I finally I got my answer to this question. In fact, referring back to Ben Mattlin's teenage years he often felt a thrill when he went out for cigarettes with his attendant. He wanted the feeling of being an adult just like Kandice which led him to do rebellious/adult activities (Mattlin 59). Both Ben and Kandice have fewer ways to celebrate their maturity than someone without Muscular Dystrophy or Autism. For instance, Ben could never be allowed to drive and Kandice can only go to community college. So they had to start flaunting their adulthood in creative ways, at least for Kandice. Her obsession with growing up also gave insight into why we were watching youtube videos on the grown up *Full House* children. Due to her new openness, I got to ask an inquisitive a question that made her aware of her need for recognition as an emerging adult.

As I grew closer to her, I wanted more and more to create a project that would help her grow. When we first started, I was unaware of the importance of these projects. At first I wanted to do well so that I could get a good grade and have fun doing it. But after visiting AHRC and spending time with Kandice, I saw that our projects could help our partner become a better person in some way. As Julia from AHRC pointed out those with disabilities have fewer choices than those who don't have it. By getting to know our partner, we can help them find something that will make their lives satisfying, and as I found out allow them to explore what it means

to be growing up. I suggested to Kandice we focus on a crime fighting theme. But then I thought it would be better to do it about growing up. She didn't seem as excited about the growing up theme. So at the moment I'm still trying to meld the two ideas together. I'm sure as I learn more about her, we will find a great topic that will help her future.

Also, I wanted to help guide her in the right direction when it comes to her future. I asked her what she wanted to be when she wanted to grow up and she said an engineer. I don't think she can achieve that goal with the current laws in place. At best she can attend a community college, and I don't think you can earn an engineering degree at a community college. There could be some hope in the future. Ben Mattlin for example attended Harvard at a time when virtually no one with disabilities went to college. When Harvard accepted him, "there was a recent development in government regulation for there to be a position at the school to oversee handicapped undergrads" (Mattlin 73). It is possible that a new law could allow Kandice to pursue her dream. But for now she has to deal with the current situation. So I want to gently nudge her in a different direction if I can. I want her to discover other parts of her life that are satisfying. For example, she loves music. She is so smart about finding it and knowing how to download it from different sites. I can't even do that. So I want to help her focus on more of what she can do.

Comparably, Kandice began to feel the increased need to help/care for me. This need made her a more caring person. Although, Kandice wanted to play basketball in the beginning of the semester she didn't participate in the basketball game between our classes at the gym. When I realized she wasn't playing I wondered why. But then I understood why she hadn't jumped in: it was because I was injured, and she didn't want to play when I couldn't. Also, in the beginning she wasn't that proactive with our project. But then she wanted to help, because she realized it would help me if she contributed more. She likes taking pictures and some video now.

Both of us have progressed as people due to our friendship. Kandice has become a better communicator, a more caring person, and she gained some introspection by answering a question of mine. And I have gained more knowledge about Autism, I've become more selfless by wanting to tailor the project around her needs, and become a more caring person too. It's true what Ben Mattlin said that those with disabilities can have friends too, and they can even be friends with people that don't have disabilities. I believe because we are only different mostly because of disability, that our friendship has made us grow even more than if we both had or didn't have disabilities. The harder you work at a friendship, the more you have to put yourself aside and think of the other person. That selflessness inevitably makes your character grow.

## My Final Reflection Journal on Impacts of Semester

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Uncertainty, the feeling felt by Kandice and me the first day we met. She hesitated to speak in our initial conversations doubting whether she could get past her fear of talking to me. Conversely, I spoke a lot. I tried to ask questions that I hoped she'd answer in more than one word or a sentence. I worried she wouldn't feel comfortable enough to speak more freely with me and that her disability would hold her back. We both were unsure whether we'd be able to understand each other enough to form a friendship. I'm glad to say after one or two meetings, we found that despite the fact she has autism and I don't, we could become friends.

Our breakthrough topic was boys. If two girls can get together and talk about the boys in their lives, they are bound to become friends. Thankfully, the subject of Kandice's boyfriend entered the conversation the first day I met her. As the minutes dragged by, as I said before, I wasn't sure if I'd get her to talk. But miraculously when she mentioned Valentine's Day everything changed. She then revealed that she had a boyfriend and that she was going to hang out with him on the day of love. I was shocked. Yes, I judged too soon. From our readings of how individuals with Autism lack social skills, I didn't think boys let alone boyfriends would be a topic of conversation. It reinforced the fact that people with Autism have the same needs and wants as people who aren't born with the disability. Also, that they are capable of having romantic relationships. So when I responded quite positively to this new information, she felt comfortable enough to talk and go into more detail about him. She found that I was easier to talk to than she initially thought. As girlfriends do, I shared my own stories of the relationship that I was in. And she was happy to listen: which can sometimes be the harder side of communication. Finding that initial moment of bonding helped us see that we could talk about subjects in which we were both interested.

Over the course of the semester Kandice became a more caring person: she showed this in two ways. After the day of our boy conversation, she wanted to share all her favorite YouTube videos with me, and as a good friend I was happy to watch them with her. Literally, the first thing she did, after downloading music of course, was make me watch a YouTube video. They ranged from crime dramas to *Full House*. What she discovered from these experiences was that she gained pleasure from sharing her favorite entertainment with me because it in turn made me happy. Also, she wanted to help me any chance she could get. The second day of class she wanted to go to the gym to play basketball. But at the time I had my cast on. We went to the gym, but when she realized that playing the game could hurt me she didn't join in. Instead, she decided we should go to the other parts of the gym. She had commented on my ability to move in the cast earlier that day. So I knew we hadn't played basketball because she didn't want me to get hurt. Also, as we got closer and closer to the end of the semester she told me more and more about the things she liked



because she knew I needed information for our project. One day she rattled off a list of all the TV characters she liked. Especially in the last few weeks she'd tell me as many things she liked as she possibly could.

Through whatever chance I could, I wanted to help her because I was starting to care more about her. I got my opportunity through her video choices. As we watched these videos, I often wondered why there were certain similarities to what we watched. So I decided to make it my job to figure out the pattern that emerged from her YouTube choices. I thought this pattern could reveal something about Kandice that would help her. It dawned on me that most of her YouTube choices were for adult audiences. Even when we watched the *Full House* clips she then afterward wanted to watch interviews with the grown up child stars. I figured out that all her video choices were adult oriented. So I asked her, "Why do you enjoy watching all these adult shows?"

She answered, "I want to watch adult TV because I am growing up."

Her response promoted both of us to gain a new realization. She became aware of her actions, and I found out she wanted to be seen for the young adult she was becoming.

So I took it upon myself to guide her to an independent future. First, I thought of what her skills were: what she could possibly hone in on for a job. Immediately, I thought of her expertise with the computer and music. But I wasn't sure of what she could do with those skills. People with Autism have less job opportunity than the average person. However, I learned that she could do something with her talents when I met Yeri at AHRC. He was a DJ. It surprised me that he could pursue this job because DJs need people skills along with an ear for music. With the help of AHRC he was pursuing his dream. So I learned it is possible for people with Autism to follow their dream: make it reality. I then asked Kandice if this was something she would want to do. She was actually happy with the idea. I succeeded in showing her a satisfying opportunity for her future.

Over all, Kandice and I learned that despite her disability and my lack thereof, we could form a friendship. As long as you have an open mind and heart, a relationship can be made between someone with Autism and someone who doesn't have it. This lesson should be taught to everyone. I know at the beginning of the course I was a little apprehensive, afraid because I didn't understand how to act around people with this disability. I had been exposed to it before, but the person in question was a sibling of a friend, someone I didn't often interact with. But I found that there is no need for that fear which is something I think most people in America have to understand. We tend to ignore those with disabilities instead of trying to understand them. But this course showed me as well as Kandice that people from both sides of the learning curve can not only gain understanding of each other through friendship, but also change each other for the better.

## My Certificate of Recognition of Service

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