

The People I Serve

Summerville consists of senior citizens who are sociable, but unable to live alone. What I've learned about the elderly is that patience is a virtue. They don't respond or react as quickly as they once did, and it's important to not become frustrated. You'll hear some of the most amazing stories if you're willing to listen.

One specific resident has taught me a lot through this year. Her name is Vera, and she reminds me of my own grandmother. She's originally from Russia, and the reason she stands out amongst a few of my other favorite residents is because of her knowledge of the world. She's been to several countries, and each time I see her, she has a new story to tell. When you first meet Vera, she's quiet, and looks disinterested. When you take the time to talk to her, and to actually listen, she has some of the greatest tales. My favorite is of her first trip to Chicago through the Russian Ballet. She was the singer for the Ballet, and later on when she showed me her picture, she was standing right next to the director in the most extravagant ball gown. Personally, I am a huge fan of pictures from the early 1900s and this picture contained someone I actually knew. A piece of American history was sitting next to me, telling me about her trips all around the world through the Ballet. Vera has taught me patience, because without it, I wouldn't have learned about such an amazing life.

Being at Summerville has definitely changed my outlook on the world. Some of these people have gone through everything in life, and they still treat others with respect and kindness. Some of them have lost everything, and yet they still find happiness in the world around them. If this holds true, I believe the world will survive. We have much to gain from senior citizens, whether it be personal stories or first-hand accounts of historic events.



Section 4: The People You Serve...

The people we serve with our agency are those who are 55 or older. This year, we've helped up to 15 different clients. We help both genders, although it's mostly females who call, wanting our help. Some of the people we serve are more mobile than others, just as some have more disabilities than others.

Having a year to help all of our clients, I've really learned a lot about them. I've learned more about their personality and how much we mean to them.

A lot of people say that the elderly can teach you a lot, and that is definitely true for me. From their stories and advice, I've had the chance to hear a lot of different things from many different people, and it is stuff that I will take with me through the rest of my life. Some advice was simple, while other advice was more in depth. They've taught us how to respect and help one another. They also told us how we need to take our willingness to help others, and spread it around to other people to use it throughout our lives. Hearing from some of the senior citizens that a lot of people tend to forget about them was hard, but it just made me want to help them even more.

I definitely feel differently about these senior citizens that I did when we first started. At the beginning of the year, as we were choosing our top ten volunteer agencies, I knew that I did not want to work with the elderly. Well, that changed. I ended up putting Seniors Helping Seniors as my number 1 choice, and luckily I got it, along with Lisa Tenney and Alycia Golding. Alycia was only a part of our group throughout the first semester, as she went on to volunteer somewhere else during second semester.

