

“Are you going to have teacher time with us today?”-this simple question has had the most powerful effect on my life and future.

During my volunteer time at Perry Preschool, I had the privilege of completing a service project and teaching two recycling classes to preschoolers. My service project focused on educating preschoolers about what can be recycled and the importance of recycling. One day, after I had taught both of my recycling classes, I was approached by a warm smiling face asking the question above. At first I was puzzled and of course responded no because I wasn't there teacher. But after I thought about this statement for a while, I was overcome with happiness because this simple question was one of the most powerful compliments I have ever received. From the standpoint of someone that wants to be a teacher in the future, I was very humbled by this comment. To think that I a small child I had known for 3 months addressed me as if I was their teacher shows me just how much of an impact I can have on future generations as a teacher. Volunteering at Perry Preschool has broadened my respect for volunteering and the simplicity of learning.

While I am at Perry Preschool, I help with activities ranging from art to science experiments as well as test children on material being covered in class during that time. I also was able paint a mural on the gym wall in order to embrace the idea of recycling throughout the building. In April, I had the privilege of teaching two recycling classes to the preschoolers. One of the activities we completed was using shrinky dinks in order to make key chains to remind them to recycle. They were all very excited to watch each piece of plastic shrink in the toaster oven and have since then always want to recycle every piece of paper and plastic we use.

Even though I taught these children about recycling, they have taught me so much more about ~~the~~ appreciating the simple things in life and embracing my love for learning. I now know that I truly want to be a teacher someday and share my love for knowledge with other young minds. With my patience, I was able to help several preschoolers with their everyday tasks. Volunteering at Perry Preschool has developed me as a person as helped open my eyes to the simple joys in life. I know for a fact that I want to become a teacher in the future. The preschoolers have shown me that learning is a simple part of life that just needs patience and concentration in order to succeed. Therefore, I hope to embrace this phenomenon in year to come as a study to be a teacher.

My friends at the preschool have also taught me to embrace my imagination and creativity. I came to this realization when I was playing with a young preschooler this past week. These children had just finished their snack-time and were playing in groups for free-time. On this day, I was diligently helping this boy build a railroad track for his favorite train. As I helped build the track, I was amazed at the power of this boy's imagination. He told me “let's make this one be an airplane and these ones make a big house so the train can sleep and this one be a monster truck so the train has a best friend...”and kept visualizing blocks to the point where I felt inexperienced. In this moment, I realized the boy was enjoying life to its fullest because he was using the power of his imagination. Even while he was defining simple blocks to be elaborate objects and personifying them to his liking, he seemed so entertained and happy that I could not deny

being overcome with his happiness as well. With just a couple of blocks and a wooden train, I was able to enjoy one of the simplest and happiest moments of my life through the eyes of a young boy's imagination.

During our reflection period on the plunge, we discussed how we felt about the experience and an individual said "We need to look past the material things in life in order to enjoy the simple pleasures presented in everyday situations". This sentence spoke very deeply to me and opened my eyes to see the world with a different perspective. The people that do not possess many material things in life show a different kind of happiness to the world which is almost a longer lasting and fuller type of contentment. Yet, the individuals that use their money in order to please themselves become greedy and do not get to enjoy the simple pleasures throughout one's lifetime. Therefore, we need to look past our material possessions in life and love the tranquil moments throughout our lifetimes.

I was very fortunate to come to this realization when I went on the urban plunge to Chicago in December of 2011. The simple joys people experienced with so little possessions helped me to realize that life is about serving others and not about acquiring material pleasures. I hope someday in the near future that we can embrace this perspective of life and live life to its fullest while enjoying the simple happiness service presents.