

### PSL Presentation Speech

Starting out as a PSL Green Team member was definitely something that I was unsure of at first. I have never really had the opportunity to volunteer with someone who has had a disability so working with Ricky on Thursdays was an experience that was a little outside of my comfort zone. Over the course of the year I have learned patience, how to act quickly and adapt, and how to relax and have fun.

My favorite time of volunteering was actually outside the classroom when I was invited to attend Ricky's 15th birthday party. I knew as soon as he asked that I would be more than happy to go and share that special day with him at Scores Fun Center. As I pulled in I had a small idea of what it was going to be like but when I got inside and found the table that they were bowling at I couldn't believe my eyes. Three lanes were taken up by 12 or so special needs kids and tons of parents/helpers laughing and eating food. I stopped a little distance away and just took in the amazing scene before me and I almost let my emotions get the best of me. These kids and people were having an absolute blast and it filled me with so much happiness that I was instantly overflowed with joy. I spotted Ricky and as soon as he saw me he yelled, "Blaine!" and pointed at me while he was running over to give me a hug. Seeing all of these kids supporting each other, getting support, having a good time, and being themselves was the highlight of my volunteering. Watching Ricky get his pedal four <sup>-Huge</sup> wheeler and open all of his presents listening to the excited giggles of his and the kids was such an enjoyable moment. Ricky's mom and dad <sup>(and brother's kids)</sup> are some of the strongest and most positive people that I have ever met and they along with Lori and many other helpers thanked me profusely for coming and helping him through the year. I could hardly speak because I saw another group of people that I was serving without even realizing it: his parents. I will hold this memory close to me for the rest of my life as every time I think about it I understand the joys that I can bring to myself and others can bring to me.

I know it is not a story but one of the most important things that volunteering has taught me is that the little things matter the most. Being able to take Ricky out and do something that gets him involved in the school besides sitting all day is an important part of his day. During our recycling runs we have some rules and rituals that have been set into place that make my volunteering that much more fun. I quickly learned that I would not be the driver of the hopper (giant collecting bin for recycling) because Ricky likes to pretend that he is driving a car and prides himself in his ability to have such an important job. Whenever we come across water fountains in the hall it is an absolute must to stop and take a small drink because collecting recycling is a very strenuous task. It may sound weird but every week I look forward to enjoying the little things because I know they are helping someone through their day.

Recycling and helping with a special needs boy really opened my eyes to volunteering services and how they help the community. I look forward to continuing my service as I grow older because I have seen the good qualities that community service has left in me

*- Working with GS. (at the beginning)*