

Emeritus Experience

I have learned a lot of useful things from my volunteer experiences I have had in the past year. I've met many new people and have made a lot of new friends. Things have been taught to me that I never put a lot of thought into. I have learned how to be a better people person and be patient with people who don't operate at the same pace as others or myself. I learn to take things slow and just embrace the things that come at you no matter what they are. In life you're going to have challenges and obstacles that stand in your way but as a person it's your job to overcome these things and be the best person that you can be.

In the beginning of Perry Service Learning class I had struggles on picking where I want to volunteer. After a while Mr. Soedar pointed me in the right direction towards an Assisted Living place called Emeritus. I want to thank Mr. Soedar for giving me the opportunity of getting a volunteer experience here and for introducing me to one of the best men I ever knew. At first volunteering here I didn't really know how to approach this experience. I didn't know what to say to the folks when we talked and I didn't know how to relate to them so I just sat back and listened. Then I learned how to speak with the folks and give them advice if they needed it. I have created a bond with these people and play trivia games with them, golf, arts and crafts and many more fun things.

I continued going here every Sunday and being with these people and making many new friends. All of these people were special to me in some way but one person that was really special in my heart was Warren Felder. I would visit him every Sunday and when I could during the week. We would do activities together and sometimes just sit in his room and talk about life. He has taught me so many things and has told me many funny stories about his life as a kid. Every time I was with Warren I would be smiling and that's why he gave the nickname "Smiley" and on occasions he would call me handsome. He always knew how to brighten up my day and make it better and that's why I enjoyed visiting him.

This man taught me no matter what you're doing in life or where you are or how hard something is, there will always be a positive out of some situation. Warren knew that his death was coming closer and closer everyday and this man embraced it. He knew he lived a great life and had great experiences through his years as a teenager, in the military, being married and many more things. This man lived life to the fullest and was a really outgoing man despite the things he was suffering from. I am really proud to say that I met this man and that I volunteered with him and he has gave me some great memories. He has not only become some man I visit but he has become a part of me like my family. He is like a grandpa to me and gave me great advice and supported me through everything I told him about. Even though Warren is in a better place now, I will never forget him and he will always be in my heart wherever I go. I'll remember all the fun times we had together and all the things he taught me. Warren will live on through me for the rest of my life.

Volunteering for Emeritus and being with Warren has brought many different things to my attention. I have had a lot of good learning experiences and have learned many new things. Warren has inspired me to go out and help people and possibly pursue a degree in psychiatry. He has made me a better person and has really helped me shape up on my people skills and have more patience with people like him. Hopefully I can be successful in the future and if I am I will remember who inspired me to be what I am and owe it all to him. I never got the chance to say goodbye to Warren but I really will miss him no matter where I am and he has created a legacy through me that will carry on for always and forever.

By: Chris Santee