



Celebrating the Outstanding Work of our Students

“Community Service”

by Ryan Kramer

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Last year, I was asked to help out assisting the teacher for the younger classes at TCC’s KidSchool. This kind of community service is called Talmud Torah. It intrigued me, because I had never thought of being a teaching assistant before. When TCC came to me and asked if I wanted to do this, I figured that I’d give it a try to see how I liked it. Well, it turned out that helping as a teaching assistant became more important to me than I thought it would.

I learned a lot helping out in the classes. I saw just how important a good teacher is. Three of my four grandparents were teachers, and this makes me feel like I am following in their footsteps, especially since I am thinking of going into music education as a career. The kids in my class taught me just how influential a teacher can be, but they also taught me about the responsibilities that a teacher has. I learned how to teach, and how to deal with pressure, and many other things that I never would have learned otherwise.

Working at TCC also taught me the value of helping out the kids who were shy. During this year, there was a student in our class who didn’t want to talk to anyone. I was trying to figure out how to get him to talk, when I heard another kid in my class talking about Ben 10 to him, and the kid perked up. Now I don’t know what this says about me, but I really like Ben 10, so I was able to connect with him. I went over, and started talking to him, and pretty soon, he was talking. He now talks to everyone regularly. It made me feel good that I was able to help this kid feel more at home at TCC, and maybe help him fit in with other people in the rest of his life.

KidSchool taught me a lot, and I was able to feel good about the work I did there. There were several other projects that I have undertaken as well. One of them is volunteering at the Shakespeare Theater of New Jersey.

I have been in the Junior Corp for the last two years, which is the summer camp they have for kids under 14, and I hope to get into the Senior Corp this summer. The people who run these camps always encourage us to volunteer in the theater. One of the options is ushering, which I really like. It’s fun, interesting, and you learn things about the theater you never would learn otherwise. For instance, you learn about all the things that happen while you’re watching the show, and just how much work ushering is. This activity ties in with my Major research project, because it puts me in my favorite place, the theater.

Another way I have tried to help out my community is by participating in the Susan B. Komen walk for breast cancer. One of my friends has been doing this for a long time, ever since she had her Bat Mitzvah, and this year she invited me along. It was really fun, and we all had a good time. The fact that something so simple can help so many people with such a terrible disease is incredible. If everyone could do something as easy as this, then our job helping out would be almost done.

I have also made several other attempts to help out with my community. For instance, a while back, we heard about a dog owner's house which caught on fire. The people were ok, but the dog died of smoke inhalation. I had known about 'pet oxygen masks,' which can help keep an animal alive until the firefighters can get it to a vet. I thought that this could help out people in my community, because there are a lot of pets in my neighborhood. I emailed all three fire departments in my area, and asked if they had these masks, and if they didn't, would they be interested in getting them. I volunteered to purchase the masks for them if they wanted. They all said that they already had them, but they were happy that I had asked.

These projects have taught me just how important it is to help out your community. However, I think that there are more ways I can help out. You may recall from my Role Model paper that Pete Seeger started up a singing movement built around and named after a boat, the Clearwater. The movement still tries to help keep the Hudson and the rest of the environment clean. This is very cool, because they use music to get people together just like we did today, and so I will be donating a portion of my Bar Mitzvah money to the Clearwater organization.