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Reflective Essay- The Hallmark

The Hallmark was a success from the very beginning. Going into this whole experience, I was defiantly hesitant and a little unaware of really what I was getting myself into. I grew up as a pastor’s daughter and so I dealt with older people from our church all the time. Honestly, I do not have the best experiences with them, so my eager desire to work with the elderly was not very much there. I remember the first day thinking that this was just what I had to do for my class requirements, and after the first day at the Hallmark it quickly became something that I knew I was going to want to continue for long time to come.

The first day Allison Miller, the director of the Hallmark, introduced me to Lila. Lila was an older and witty lady who I loved right from the start. Lila did not know a thing about computers and we had to start from the very beginning with her. I was very nervous that Lila would get impatient and frustrated by the whole thing, but was surprisingly positive and also patient with me, since this was the first time I had ever done something like this. We started with the mouser size and she was doing great. It was such an amazing experience to see how happy she was getting through such a simple process of clicking on links and buttons. Then, after our hour was up we began to talk and got to know each other better. Lila and I realized that we had a lot in common. Lila used to be a long distance runner, as I am now. We began to chat about how stubborn we were when it came to injuries, and how we never let them get in the way. She is such a go getter and mentioned that nothing ever made her stop running and living her life. Just from a short 20 minute conversation I could already tell that this lady was me 60 years from now.

As weeks went by and Lila and I got closer and closer, she was also making great progress and her son was actually buying her a computer for her room. Unfortunately, she was dealing with a load of stress because they had just sold her house in Princeton, New Jersey, where she had lived before the Hallmark. She continued to come to every lesson tired and stressed about the move. I couldn’t help but feel bad for her and tried to make the computer lessons as fun as possible to distract her from the stress she was dealing with. I have to say it may have been one of the greatest moments I have ever had, when she told me that I was the one thing that was keeping her happy through the whole moving process. Knowing that I was a reason for making Lila a little bit happier everyday made me feel so great, and once again I was walking out of the Hallmark feeling better then the last time.

For week six I showed up excited and eager to see Lila, when Allison told me the one thing I did not want to hear. Lila had a stroke and it was clearly due to all of the stress she was dealing with. I did not know what to think at that point. I was not sure if it was normal to be as upset as I was, because I had only known her for such a short time, but Lila was truly one of a kind and we had become so close, so quick. It was even more depressing when I got the hint from Allison that she may not remember me. Lila had become a huge part of life and I began to think that I may not ever see her again and became really upset. I had to pull it together though and teach another resident at the hallmark. Allison paired me with Eleanor and she quickly cheered me up. Eleanor and I realized that we had lived in the same town for years and that her kids and I went to the same High School. As we finished up the computer lesson Eleanor and I continued to talk. The other lady next to me who was working with Anna joined in the conversation which dragged on for about almost an hour. Then Eleanor asked if Anna and I were hungry, and like your average college student we responded with a quick yes. We ended up having lunch with Sarah, Eleanor, and two of their friends. Eleanor began talking about how a young man who was a physiologist came to the hallmark and talked about sexual relationships between the elderly. Now don’t let me fool you, it took a lot of courage for her to say that and was very hesitant with her words, it was so cute. I immediately reacted by saying “Oh don’t worry, chapter 7 in social Gerontology, already know everything that has to do with that” I then handed Eleanor the book and she could not even say the chapters name out loud and began blushing. The other ladies and I started to laugh so hard, that we were almost in tears. That was by far one of the best experiences at the Hallmark.

The Hallmark was a great experience and I would do it ten more times. Each and every resident that I met there truly affected me for the better. I’ll never forget all the laughing, excitement and happiness I got from all of people there. They all are such an inspiration and I would be happy to work with them for a long time to come. Lila was such a great lady to meet. Meeting someone who is so much like you and 60 years older I don’t think is very common and I will cherish that forever. She taught me a lot through her stories and wise words. I leave her knowing to always keep going, never let anything stop you, and remain positive no matter what the situation may be. Although Lila had a stroke and I may not see her again, I will always remember how happy she made me and the lessons she taught me. I hope that even if I made the smallest impact on Lila, it did truly help her through the stressful process. Walking out of the Hallmark every time feeling like a better person and so happy for what I had just done will always be on my mind. The Hallmark was an amazing experience and success from the beginning.