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CIS 102T – Reflection Paper

                My view on residential homes for senior citizens changed in accordance with my visits to the Hallmark. Before I visited the Hallmark I imagined senior citizen housing a hospital. I envisioned white tiled floors surrounded by white walls with nurses in white coats scurrying from room to room checking the health status of residents. I pictured the residents’ rooms to be all white with metallic beds, shelves and medicine cabinets. Needless to say my overall views were not positive.

When I passed through the automatic doors and entered the Hallmark there was very little white. The lobby looked nothing like a hospital waiting room and instead resembled a hotel. Allison, the person in charge, escorted us to a room where we would be meeting with the residents the time I spent waiting for them to enter, I wondered what they would be like and how they would feel about us being there. It turns out they were all gregarious people and were eager to learn how to use the computer. I was looking for a student that had some experience with the computer and as luck would have it Larry Greenberg had fit my criteria.

One week after my initial meeting at the Hallmark my first lesson with to begin with Larry and I was hopeful he was still eager to learn and that I would be an adequate teacher. When I arrived I was told Larry was unavailable and was instead paired up with a woman named Heather. I was escorted by Allison through the hotel like hallways of the eighth floor until we arrived at Heather’s door. I was greeted by a woman about 5’8” with a shaky kind voice and red hair in curls. She allowed me to go in and offered me a seat. She wanted to get right down to business and told me exactly what she would like to know. Her main concern was getting better at using AOL’s email. I never used AOL’s email before so I was hoping that it was similar to that of Hotmail’s so that I would be able to help Heather as best I could. The lesson went well and I taught her how to delete emails, add attachments, and how to add favorites to the desktop. I noticed that as the lesson progressed she became more open and willing to share personal stories. After the first lesson I felt the next upcoming weeks would be enjoyable and unproblematic.

I officially met Larry for my second lesson and he seemed happy to be there with me instead of at the doctors like the previous week. I wasn’t sure what he would like to learn since he had some experience with computers. It turns out he also wanted to learn to email as so many other older adults did. He had a two-page list of contacts with their emails and he wanted to be able to send them messages. I set him up with an email account for Hotmail since it was the one I was most familiar with. Before the lesson ended we were able to add a few contacts and noticed he was happy and satisfied that he finally had an email account. I was pleased because I was able to help him.

The following weeks I kept meeting with Larry and I could tell he was even more eager for his lesson with each passing week. He also opened up more and more and told me stories of his past. I was also eager to show up and teach him because I left each time with the satisfying feeling of doing something good. It was a good experience for us both because it was a change in both of our lives. He hasn’t been a student in years and I’ve never been a teacher. When my teaching and his learning came to an end I could see in his face how happy he was to receive his diploma. He thanked me and I felt very heart-warmed.

Overall, I believe this was a great class. It was a change from all other classes because the learning was not done in a traditional class and in the traditional sense. In a traditional college classroom students are supposed to be students but here they were given a change to be teachers and still learn. I learned to be more patient and because of Larry I realized my strengths and weaknesses in being a teacher. As a result I can never view the Hallmark with a negative outlook again.