Service Learning

Samantha Braga

When taking a service learning class, the experience is like no other. Besides the classroom curriculum, it provides hands on experience within the community where the main focus is not based on textbooks and reading but, on what we can do. While service learning assists the community, it is different from community service in that every hands on activity which has been reinforced by classroom studies. It provides us with time for reflection and a chance to give back to our community.

As my very first service learning class, Intergenerational Computing was one I would never forget. Intergenerational Computing was a course where we as students were teacher computers between the generations. Every week, as part of our class session, we took part in visiting a residential home for senior citizens where we had two seniors which we’d regularly teach. In today’s society, technology has taken over a major part of our lives, but for the seniors, there has been a gap within the advancement with technology in which many of them can benefit from.

For seniors who live in nursing homes, they might not have the chance to hear from their children and grandchildren as often as they wish but, with an advance in technology it gives them an opportunity to keep gain more contact and benefits their relationships. It also helps strengthen and exercise sensors such as sight and touch by allowing them to connect the two when seeing something on the screen and reacting to it by guiding the mouse. The computer offers many positive benefits to the seniors using them.

While helping the seniors, one of their major requests was to learn to e-mail. For many of us, e-mailing has become so basic as if our minds were programmed to do so. For someone with little to any experience using technology, this can be difficult, and it takes time and effort to learn all it entitles. Working with a senior, there was a lot of reiterating applied and patience was a must.

With all the effort applied to the lessons, the outcome made it all worthwhile. It became more than just showing them a basic computer skill but, about reconnecting them with family and bettering their lives. The paramount of the class was being able to make a difference to someone else. The experience became so rewarding and, was never looked at as a task but, a blessing. Their truly is, no other experience like a service learning course.