

College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University

DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU

Celebrating Scholarship and Creativity Day

Undergraduate Research

4-21-2022

Service through Compassion

Zayde Smith

College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University, zsmith001@csbsju.edu

Noe Vega

College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University, nvega001@csbsju.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/ur_csccday

Recommended Citation

Smith, Zayde and Vega, Noe, "Service through Compassion" (2022). *Celebrating Scholarship and Creativity Day*. 186.

https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/ur_csccday/186

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Celebrating Scholarship and Creativity Day by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@csbsju.edu.

Service Through Compassion

Zayde Smith, Noe Vega
Dr. Chinopfukutwa

College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University



Abstract

As our service-learning project for our Community Psychology class, we volunteered at Catholic Charities located in Saint Cloud. We have worked to continue to promote the Charities goal of providing services to those in crisis and/or seeking help. We guided clients through the food shelf and informed them how much product they were allowed to have, cleaned the lobby of the Charity, helped clients carry their supplies to their vehicle, all while making sure they felt welcome. The purpose of this Charity is to provide relief for those that may be struggling to make ends meet. They do this by offering a fully stocked food shelf and clothing section.

Introduction

Catholic Charities USA is a nationwide nonprofit organization that works to provide services to people, with a focus on those who have a lower income. Catholic Charities serves people in Central Minnesota and relies on generous individuals, foundations, businesses and faith communities to help provide resources for those in need. These resources include behavioral health services, community services, affordable and transitional housing services, supportive living, and social concerns (Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Saint Cloud).

The area we worked in was community services, specifically emergency services. The branch in Saint Cloud where we volunteered offered a food shelf, basic everyday essentials, and financial assistance. We were in the food shelf section of this charity. During our time volunteering we worked many jobs. These jobs included checking clients in and managing appointments, walking the clients through the food shelf and informing them how much of the items they may take, assisting the clients with packing food and bringing it to their vehicles, and finally ensuring the space was always clean.

Method

Participants

- Community Members receiving aid ranged in age from early 20's to late 70's
- Volunteers from the community ranged in age from early 20's to late 70's

Procedure

- Volunteer once a week for 4 hours
- Assist community members with picking out goods according to their needs
- Keep the community center clean and sanitized
- Check in community members and direct them to the proper locations.

Obstacles

- Scheduling Limitations
- Ensuring COVID-19 safety measures were followed
- Language and cultural barriers

Accomplishments

- Develop and maintain relationships with the community
- Provide the community with healthy nutritious meal

Long term Benefits

- Community members have a place they can go whenever they might need assistance when it comes to food, finances, and other essential items

Discussion

Our service-learning project relates to the field of community psychology because service to the community was our core focus. The program is committed to practicing prevention at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. In our service, we provided aid to individuals already in need and struggling to obtain food in addition to those who were at risk of falling into poverty. Serving with Catholic Charities really opened our eyes to the diversity in a community and the different living situations that are unique to every individual. Our project also gave us the opportunity to see how even the smallest gesture can go a long way in changing a person's life and help create those vital relationships that keep a community together.

Community empowerment was also a crucial part of our project. As an organization, Catholic Charities provides the tools and resources to support the community in its quest to better itself. As volunteers, members of the community can help one another in times of need and positively impact the quality of life both for the person providing the aid and for the person who is receiving the aid.

If given the opportunity to volunteer again we would volunteer in smaller increments which in turn would allow us to spend a longer period of time at the community center. With our approach we chose to do longer shifts once a week which meant we completed the project in a shorter amount of time. If we had the opportunity to continue serving the community, we would look towards expanding the type of service we could provide the community. With our particular project, our focus was primarily on providing meals to the community. The Catholic Charities center did have other volunteering positions that we were not able to explore because of scheduling limitations so this would definitely be an area we could further explore.

References

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Cloud. (n.d.). *Food Shelf Services available at Catholic Charities of St. Cloud*. Food Shelf Services Available at Catholic Charities of St. Cloud.

Jason, L., Glantsman, O., & O'Brien, J. F. (2019). *Introduction to community psychology*. Open Textbook Library.

