For my mini-experience, I traveled with my interest group to the Children’s Theater in downtown Cincinnati. For about an hour and a half, we worked as ushers for the theater’s production of *Alice in Wonderland*. Our job mainly entailed passing out playbills at the door and directing audience members to their seats, or elsewhere in the theater if they were lost.

There were a lot of children, of course, and I thought it was really adorable to see how excited they were to see the play. I expected it to be kind of a boring time while we were there, but I ended up having so much fun interacting with the children and their parents. I enjoyed it so much that, at the end of the day, I signed up for the theater’s email list so I could get information about what they’re doing and so I could come back and volunteer again sometime.

My group and I thought our mini-experience would relate to the learning outcome of “identify[ing] and differentiat[ing] multiple ways to contribute towards the development or achievement of the community’s goals,” under the thematic area of community engagement. We originally had several ideas as to what to do for our mini-experience; we identified many ways we could help our community and then we narrowed down our options until we found one we thought would be uniquely helpful to the community. None of us are particularly interested in the arts, yet we thought we should step out of our collective comfort zone somewhat with this project.

The documented impacts of community service on the community are numerous. Service can be beneficial in making an environment cleaner and more beautiful and in educating individuals about those they live and interact with. The effects of service projects can be far-reaching, sometimes even “promoting racial understanding, and [allowing individuals to] develop a meaningful philosophy of life” (Berger and Milem 86). In completing our service, we aided children in having a safe and fun time experiencing the arts within their own community. One of any city’s goals is to share art and music with its citizens and I believe we helped Cincinnati get closer to this goal by helping the city’s youngest citizens have a positive encounter with theater.

In the future, I hope to participate in volunteer projects similar to this one. I enjoyed doing something different, something I don’t usually do when I’m looking for service opportunities. I had fun going to my city’s children’s theater when I was younger to see plays, and it was rewarding for me to see children from Cincinnati experience the same kind of wonder and excitement. It felt really good to be a part of that experience for them and I feel like I learned a lot from the experience.

References

Joseph B Berger and Jeff F. Milem. "The Impact of Community Service Involvement on Three Measures of Undergraduate Self-Concept" *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice* Vol. 40 Iss. 1 (2002)

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