

Public Speaking

My Day At The Soup Kitchen

Have you ever heard this quote by Mother Teresa? "If you can't feed a hundred people, feed just one." Think about these meaningful words for a second. Can you guess what my speech topic is? Good morning/afternoon/evening: Madame/Mr. Chairperson, honourable judges, teachers, parents, fellow students and guests. For my speech this year I decided to write about my incredible experience during the March Break. I had the chance to go to the Wesley Urban Ministries center on Ferguson Avenue. For those of you who don't know what the Wesley Urban Ministries center is, it's a soup kitchen and shelter.

Most of us in our school communities will never have to go to a soup kitchen, but for others they go there everyday. If you have been sitting here saying to yourself "What is this soup kitchen thing she is talking about?" It's a place where food is served to the needy. There are many different reasons why people go to a soup kitchen. Some people are street people. They go because it's a place to get out of the freezing cold in the winter or out of the blazing hot sun in the summer. It's a place to stay at night and get a meal. Other people who go to the soup kitchen may have a home that they rent but don't have enough money to buy food. Maybe they need to save some of their money and in time they can start buying their own food. Some of these people may have health problems and others have maybe taken the wrong path in life. It doesn't matter the reason. As Catholics we are called to help others in need and accept them for who they are.

One of the reasons I wanted to go to the soup kitchen was because I felt I needed to help the less fortunate in our community. I wanted to do a good deed as a sign to myself that I truly am ready to receive the sacrament of Confirmation and become an adult in the eyes of the Catholic Church. Everyone who works at the soup kitchen is a volunteer. These people want to give back to others by taking about five hours every week out of their busy schedules. If you really think about it, that's not a lot of time. You are probably thinking, "Do these volunteers really enjoy doing dishes and preparing food for complete strangers?" Well, I have living proof. My grandfather is a volunteer at the Wesley Urban Ministries center. Since he started volunteering he has told me that he does enjoy helping the less fortunate. Maybe he would rather not wash as many dishes but at the end of the day he knows that every single person really does appreciate what he is doing for them.

After talking to my grandfather I realized that I wanted to know what it feels like to be a volunteer. Before I could go with him he had to ask permission first. Frances, the lady in charge of the volunteers said that I was allowed to go on the Monday of March Break. I was so excited! I arrived at the soup kitchen at nine o'clock. My grandfather introduced me to Diane, Renata, the chef, and some other workers. Prior to getting started I had to wash my hands, put on my apron, put on my hat and roll up my sleeves. I could not wait to get started. I was told how everything worked and all the rules. My first job was cleaning cups. I got to help make coffee and tea. I cleaned vegetables, put food on trays and opened boxes of cookies. I was able to see where all of the food is stored and I met the other two volunteers. Claudia was a retired woman and Lubna was a college student.

As lunchtime approached Renata and Lubna started serving. The lunch menu was roast pork, mashed potatoes and gravy, carrots and a bag of cookies. When people started finishing my grandfather, Claudia and I started cleaning the trays. It was a very busy lunch. They served 176 people. I probably cleaned 120 of those trays. My hands got all wrinkly.

After everyone was served we all started cleaning up. You may never have guessed this but some of the people help clean up after they are done eating. It's their way of saying "Thanks." You are probably thinking, "Is it not weird serving complete strangers?" The chef Renata has worked there for 17 years. She basically knows everybody. She knows almost everyone's name and has a different conversation with each one. I left the soup kitchen at twenty-five to two. The day had gone great.

While doing my jobs I felt really good inside. I knew that it was the right thing to do. Many of you will be thinking, "You can wash dishes at home, what is the point?" Well, I will tell you a secret. I will probably never do that many dishes at home but I would anytime at the soup kitchen.

I feel that this year my March Break was the best one I have ever had because of this awesome experience. I must tell you that if any of you get the chance to experience something as incredible as this, you will enjoy it. Many of you have to be questioning the message my speech is supposed to send, but remember what Mohammed Ali said, "Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth."

By: Sarah Rosser