

Between Friends' Club Scholarship Application

I have been involved at Between Friends' Club as a WESOAR program leader at the beginning of the fall 2010 session. I started at the NOTT program on the same day that I also did my training, it was a chaotic day where I learned about BFC and then had to put that training immediately in to action, although everything turned out fine in the end, it was quite chaotic. In the winter session, I continued my role as program leader for NOTT and also had the opportunity to explore the diversity of BFC's programs through assisting in the supervision of new leaders, which gave me an opportunity to apply the knowledge that I had learned over my possession and apply it in a teaching capacity. In the spring session I lead a WESOAR bowling program and also got involved with ICANN program assisting a child with Autism in a martial arts program. This experience showed me the value and impact that BFC has had in the community, especially in the bowling program which took place at Lets Bowl, where all of the staff knew the participants on a first name basis and were even keen enough to guess exactly what kind of food the participants would want to order ahead of time.

In early spring I applied for the position of Inclusion Coordinator at YMCA Camp Riveredge, where I spent previous summers as a counselor. Even though I had the experience and resume to apply for the position, I was still unsure if I would get it, due to failed applications in the past. It was a relief to receive this job and be able to combine my knowledge with what I had learned at BFC along with my YMCA experience. Also around this time I had received the Rookie Program Leader of the Year award, again an award I did not expect to win, given the length of time and impact that the other program leaders who were nominated had on BFC. When the summer ended and my Inclusion Coordinator position was finished, I stayed on as a WESOAR program leader and took on two different programs that offer different challenges, the NOTT program and the scrapbooking program, the familiarity of the NOTT program is complemented by the challenges posed by the scrapbooking program. As a person who doesn't identify

himself as a "crafty" person, the challenge of scrapbooking is astronomical, but the help of the volunteers and office staff I am able to manage the challenges.

Currently I am pursuing a Bachelor of Community Rehabilitation and in the future hope to pursue a teaching degree and be involved in the education field. I am also currently doing a fall and winter semester practicum at BFC where I am developing a survey that will be given out to families in Airdrie and Okotoks to see what kind of need is available for BFC programs, and hopefully use the data collected to be used to gain funding if there is a need found in those areas. Over the past few weeks I have also been involved with Aktion club and their volunteering, which has enlightened me to the need for people with disabilities to be involved in the community in a volunteer capacity.

The impact of BFC on me is a reciprocal one, over the past year I have put in over 75 hours in all the roles that I have played at BFC, but have received training that cannot be measured in a mindful way. My first impressions with people with disabilities has strictly been with children, but after working at BFC I have become more aware of the need for relationships of the caliber existing at BFC to continue well into adulthood. In terms of a population that exists within the population of people that are disabled, adults are often over looked. Working at BFC has shown me that this population needs to have just as many opportunities for community interaction as anyone else, and through BFC they are provided with that opportunity. Although I hope to pursue a background in primary or secondary education, the experience that I have had at BFC and working with adults will have a lasting impact on my outlook on people with disabilities.

Over the rest of the fall and winter university schedule I will continue my practicum at BFC and also continue on as a WESOAR leader and hopefully in the summer pursue a position at Camp Bonaventure. Working at BFC has provided me with lots of opportunities and BFC is an environment that fosters growth in their participants as well as their employees, a journey of growth that I hope to continue in my time at BFC.