

Marco Rangel

SL 497: Independent Study SL

Professor Burke

10/23/2017

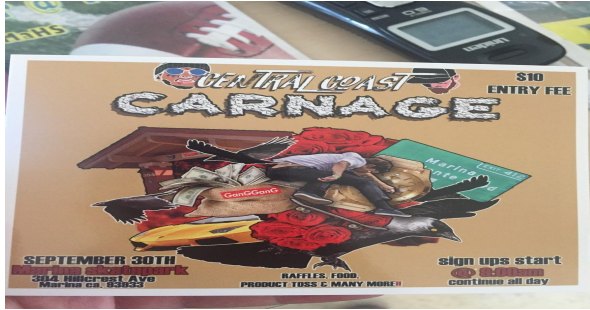
### General Questions to Process Your Service Learning Experience



· What did you do today that made you feel you made a difference? Why?

#### Entre 1.

- One of the biggest thing that stood out to me today was being able to talk to kids about something that they are very passionate about. I had little to no knowledge about the subject, which was skateboarding. I took it upon myself to ask the kids why did they like to skate or how was it that they got involved in such sport. I perhaps did not do something physical, but as I was speaking with one of the kids, he said “do you want to see my new trick?” I responded, of course I want to see your new trick. He proceeded to execute his new trick. After completing his trick I noticed the “Ben” was happy to land his trick but has happier that someone saw that he had done something new. To me, I did something positive by looking, I was able to understand that he probably tried to complete this move several times and that he failed until he was able to land his trick. I was able to look beyond and understand the time he spent, how many times he failed, how many times he tried, how much effort was put into doing this task. That for me was rewarding by just looking I was able to share his enthusiasm to continue skating and to continue practicing.



## Entre 2.

- As I walked to the back part of the teen center, I noticed two kids passing around a soccer ball. A majority of the kids were huddled into different groups. I decided to head over where the kids passing the ball were and began talking to them. We began to play and started a small scrimmage, them versus me. Suddenly a couple of kids wanted to join, for me a big thing is that they all get to participate and work as a team. I implemented a couple of rules such as before they score everyone has to pass the ball once, they could not take more than four touches on the ball and other simple rules. The game was going good without any problems. However, there was a girl whom wanted to play. Unaware of her skills to play, i told the boys that “Virginia” would be on my team. I noticed she had no idea how to play, for me that was a crucial moment, helping someone understand how the game works and creating an interest for them. I knew the boys were more skillful and understood the game so having “Virginia” on my team was a in which I could help her. By the end of the game she was very happy, funny to mention that the boys stopped playing while “Virginia” and I passed the ball back and forth. Whether she continues to play or not is not so much the importance, to me what made me feel good was teaching her something new she can do, maybe she starts watching the sport, maybe she starts to play and can become something she enjoys and new skill she develops.



### Entre 3.

- As I walked to the back part of the teen center I noticed two girls that were sitting. They were a little more secluded from everyone. Making my way over I grabbed a football and asked them if they wanted to play. Their immediate response was no, I decided to take a seat next to them and ask them why they were secluded from everyone. They both said they were tired and had been doing group project. I asked them what type of project it was they were working on. One of them mentioned it was family picture project, without me asking she said do you want to see it. "Vanessa", began explaining where her family was from and why she loved her family. One important thing she mentioned was that she was not having the best time with her parents because they were strict with her. Not knowing much there was not much to say, but what I did tell her was, that maybe your parents are strict with you because they care for you and because you are growing. Many times as a child I was restricted from doing things, but that was because my parents wanted me to stay out of trouble, prevent me from hanging out with the wrong people, wanting the best for me and most importantly giving me the tools to take advantage of the opportunities that I get. I really understood "Vanessa" I tried to explain those ideas to her and that maybe her parents want the best for her. At the end of the talk, I think she was able to understand that her parents want the best for her and want her to stay out of trouble. This moment for me felt like I made a difference because I was able to help "Vanessa" see where and why it was that her parents were strict with her.



· Did anything happen that made you feel uncomfortable? If so, what and why do you think it made you feel this way?

- Overall there were no moments in which I felt truly felt uncomfortable. The only moment perhaps I was a little uncomfortable was with some of the kids hugging me. I did not have a problem with them doing such but I understand that parents can perceive things differently. For me it was the idea of creating some boundaries, but at the same time not discouraging the kids to approach me or feel intimidating.

· What did you do that seemed to be effective or ineffective in service to others? What can you learn from this?

- One of the things that I felt was effective was to ask the children what their name was and a question they could answer such as; what is your favorite color, what is your favorite food, what is your favorite song, something simple they could answer. That for me was a way to start a conversation without scaring them off. Once they would answer the question I would try and elaborate with regards to their answer to keep the conversation going and to learn as much as possible about them.
- My problem sometimes was that I was a little too ambitious and wanted to talk to as many kids as possible. The problem with that was to learn all this names, sometimes I would forget their name or get them mixed with someone else's name. I understand it can be difficult to learn the kids names on the first day and can take time.

· How do you tell friends and family about your experience in the community and in this class? What kinds of responses to you get? How do you feel about their reactions?

- One of the ways in which I tell people about my experience is that it is something different from our regular routine. Service learning is a way to break from the world and enter another zone where you do not have to worry about anything other than having a good time, enjoy the presences of other, but most important learning from others and learning about yourself. Even though it is a required course, I see this opportunity as an experience that not many people have the privilege to help others, to gain an insight experience about someone else, learn how people interact and much more.

· What was the most positive thing that happened this week at your site? What can you learn from this?

Entre 1

- One of the most positive things from this week was simply paying attention to someone and looking at their accomplishment. We can learn so much, one of the things is to simply listen to others and be supportive of their new accomplishment.

Entre 2

- During this week, one of the most positive things that occurred was asking “Jerry” about why he liked to play the piano. Similar to the encounter I had with the kid who showed



me his skateboard trick, “Jerry” liked to talk about how he began to play the piano and how many days a week he practiced. For him that was extremely important, because if he learned to play it better he said his mom would purchase him a piano. What I learned from “Jerry” was that this kids have ambition to achieve something. That they work hard to get better at these different skills because it is what they enjoy.



### Entre 3

- During another of my visits, one of things that stood out the most that felt good doing was helping make food. It is nice to see that the teen center makes food for the kids and lets everyone eat with no questions asked. There is always food that the kids can take and eat and all they have to do is sign their name on a sheet of paper. I love to know that because of my help there is not starving kids out in the world, even if it is just to feed them here in the teen center.



· What was most difficult? What can you learn from this?

- One of the hardest things to do is get to know all the kids name. In different occasion I have learned that kids sometimes can feel a little upset because you do not know their name. What I learned was that some kids feel upset, others sometimes think it is funny and change their names. Every kid is different and one has to be aware and careful to not make the kids upset.

· Is there a person you find particularly interesting at your site? Why?

- There is one person who to me stood out the most, her name is “Kelly” and happens to laughing a lot of the time. I did not really talk to her at first, I would sit by them and listen to their conversations. I began to notice and heard her laugh most of the time, I found her laugh very enjoyable and wanted to get to know this person who was full of laughter and joy. Some of the conversations she had with her friends were family related problems, but somehow “Kelly” found a way to make a joke and turn that negativity into something to laugh about. I found that amusing that she was aware about the things going on but instead of dwelling on it, she would rather laugh and smile. That personality trait was what I found most particularly interesting from my site.



· Were you disappointed at your site this week? If so, why? What can you learn from this?

Overall I have not felt disappointed, aside one thing. I noticed a lot of the older kids have the tendency to curse. Many of the kids have it almost embedded in the way they speak.

· Is there any situation or problem you want to discuss with someone at your site? with your classmates? with your supervisor? with your professor?

- So far there has not been any situation or problem that I have needed to discuss with someone.

· Describe an average day at your site for people who use the services, for the staff, for yourself.

- The average day consist with the children arriving after school. There is a large variation of activities at the Teen Center and many kids have been going to the teen center for years. The kids show up and can choose to do homework or play games or activities. The staff also makes sure to have food for them to eat from. My job there is basically talk and hang out with the teens and help around with their homework or make sure that they are engaging with each other and respecting each other.

· Which of your goals for your service learning experience are you accomplishing? Which are still not accomplished? How can you reach all your goals? Do any goals need to be revised?

- One of my biggest goals and accomplishment is to get to know some different every time and learn something about them.
- Every visit is unique and I set up new goals. It is important sometimes to change your goals as you move in the line. Everyday is different and sometimes those goals are met early in the stage or they are not fully completed.

· Which parts of your service work come naturally to you? Which are uncomfortable?

- Overall most of the interactions with the kids come naturally. My lower division service learning was extremely helpful. I was able to use my past experience with kids to my advantage to help out here at the teen center. I also have younger brothers which helps having conversations with the teens a bit easier. The more uncomfortable parts are telling the teens what to do or at times handling the confrontation of the youth. I dislike conflict and find it difficult to approach certain situations with the teens.

· What challenges are you encountering at your site? Use analogies to think creatively:  
 “Working with \_\_\_\_\_ (name of organization or specific person) is like \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.”

- Working with Marina Teen Center is like going to the library because each kid has their own story.
- Working with Marina Teen Center is like the tip of the iceberg because you do not know the whole persona of each kid, until you talk to them and get to know them.

· How does your service work relate to you career plans? If you don't see a direct relationship (e.g. tutoring elementary school children for liberal studies majors), try to find an indirect relationship (e.g. tutoring elementary school children and developing strong listening skills will help any major).

- One of my career goals is to teach or learn more about other cultures and how people behave. I am not sure if I specifically want to work with teens when I am older but I am thinking of being teacher and this definitely helps with getting to work with a diverse group of teenagers.

· What do you now know? What do you still want to know? What have you learned?

- I know that many teens do not have it so easy growing up. I know that some of these teens are going through a lot of issues internally or even in school. I have learned to respect all of them and to help them enjoy their time at the center so that they can look forward to coming daily.

### **Critical Moments Journal (What? So What? Now What?)**

#### What?

- What did you do, see, hear, feel, think, smell?

Cold air, the morning was silent, the atmosphere felt relaxed, and the smell of dirt rose from the ground. My head was clear, opened to anything that could happen.

- What were your most vivid first impressions? Describe (or draw!) your site in as much detail as possible. Describe the people in as much physical detail as possible.



Everyone in the site is different and unique, people come from all sizes, ages, colors, personalities. Each kid has their own stories and problems, their own skills and most important their own way to express laughter and a smile.



· What does the agency do? How do they do it?

- One of the main purpose of the agency is to keep the children off the streets. Most of the children understand how things work and follow the cycle. The agency has many activities for the children such as; basketball, pool, chess, skating, video games, internet access for different purpose, instrument access. Most of the kids find this as way to do something than just being home, other kids tend to stay because their parents work and for them it is a way to be somewhere safe until they are picked up.

· What happened at the site while you were there? What interactions took place? Describe them. Describe your own participation.

- There is so much that occurs during the time frame. One has the ability to interact with the kids in different settings such as; helping them with their homework, playing basketball, pool, foosball, video games, soccer football, playing instruments. The tools for you interact with the kids are their. Many times I found it difficult to learn about the kids through only helping them with their homework. It is extremely important for the kids to be in a zone which they feel comfortable. You do not need to be the best or know what to do, but if they see you many times show interest they will have positive response. Many tend to teach you whatever the activity is and that is a way to start a conversation with a simple question as to how long have you been doing such sport or activity.



I learned more about the interests of the teens and knowing that I can be a small impact in their lives. I understand that every teen is at the center for different reasons and different motives but they are here to have fun and engage in fun activities. The readings for me were important because they illustrate different ways in which one can learn more about the kids and ways to ask questions and interact with them. Most important, one has socially awareness of who the kids are

and you create self awareness as well. Approaching each visit for me is wanting to learn more about the kids as well about myself. Every time I still continue to learn.

Now What?

Each visit I approach with with a different and open mindset. I truly do not have expectations and I feel excited to be there and see what the day will be like. I am excited to hear stories and to know what is happening in the lives of the teens and excited to hear what they have to tell me. I want to explore further and ask the teens of their future plans and know what they are planning in the future and set that example and show them that they can get to college and succeed as well. I want to be able to be a role model and make them excited for college. I feel happy and excited with my future visits to my site because I now feel I have this goal to get deeper with the teens and know about their future goals,

