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Ms. Renner

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### Self-Evaluation Essay

For my senior service learning project, I volunteered my time to run Christ Camp. I worked with my sister, Hannah Shull, to help the Lutheran Community Outreach Center's food pantry. At Christ Camp, children would play games, eat healthy snacks, make crafts, and play basketball. The Christ Camps were held on June 3rd, June 17th, July 1st, July 15th, and August 5th. The hope was to bring Jesus into the children's lives. We were asked to organize one more Christ Camp than we had planned because the children and families requested it. Children were sent home with crafts and books so they can remember Christ Camp and their experiences.

Overall I volunteered at least 35 hours to help plan, set up, and run Christ Camp. The first step of Christ Camp was to select a name for the camp. Hannah and I settled on naming the camp Christ Camp because it described what we were doing and was easy to remember. The next step was to find out if the Evansville Lutheran School gym was available on the days planned for the camp. It was found to be available so we started thinking of themes for the different days of camps. Each Christ Camp had a theme from the Bible. June 3rd was based on Creation. June 17th was based on Noah's Ark. Christmas in July was the theme for the camp held on July 1st. On July 15th, Easter was the theme of the camp. The last Christ Camp, August 5th, focused on God's love. We made flyers for Christ Camp and hung them up at the Lutheran Community Outreach Center. After the themes were established, Hannah and I began to shop for supplies.

The supplies we got included tablecloths, craft supplies, inflatables, Christian books based of each week's theme, name tags, paper bags, ingredients for snacks, and other miscellaneous items. The planning of Christ Camp for the senior project started in May and ended on August 5th.

Hannah and I had to contact a mentor to watch over our project. We decided to ask Pastor Sean from Our Redeemer Lutheran Church to be our mentor because he is a regular volunteer at the food pantry. After we had a mentor, we had to talk with the Lutheran Community Outreach Center and see if we could pair Christ Camps with their food pantry. The Lutheran Community Outreach Center thought it was a great idea and offered their help. Christ Camp also caught more attention from Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, and the Director of Christian Education offered to help Christ Camp. The Director of Christian Education was surprised no one had ever thought of running a camp like Christ Camp for the food pantry before.

This was the first time Hannah and I directed our own camp, but we had previously helped with Vacation Bible Schools at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church and St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Vacation Bible School is similar to Christ Camp because both are half day camps that are aimed to teach children about God and his love for them.

I would recommend this senior project for anyone that loves planning, children, and directing activities. This project is a great project for anyone that is thinking about being an elementary teacher or doing a job that involves children. If someone does not like children, I would not recommend this project because children are the largest aspect of this project. Christ Camp took a lot of time and supervision so a future senior would need to have dedication to their project.

I learned many priceless things while participating in Christ Camp. Over the entire camp, I learned that children love one-on-one attention. The children that came to our camp rarely lived with their parents; most of them lived with their grandparents or family friends. When the children were at Christ Camp, they were able to receive a volunteer's undivided attention. We had enough volunteers that we never had more kids than volunteers at any point during the Christ Camp. I remember one specific Christ Camp when I played basketball with a young boy for about an hour. He would get so happy whenever he made a basket and kept saying he wanted to show his grandma his new basketball skills. When his grandmother finally came to pick him up from Christ Camp, she did not pay any attention to him. I could tell he got upset when she did not recognize his newly acquired skill. I decided to try and build his confidence by giving him compliments after he made a basket; I could tell my compliments were making him feel better. It took a few minutes, but he seemed to forget about his grandmother's lack of attention. This experience helped me realize how grateful I am for my loving parents. I learned a similar lesson from a different child. A young girl and I got the chance to talk about God. She told me that she believed in God, but her parents didn't. I realize that I should also be thankful for Christian parents. Working with the kids taught me the important skill of patience in dealing with children. For example, I have learned how to use patience when the kids do crafts. The kids were very precise with their coloring so it took them longer than me to do the crafts.

Since Hannah and I did our senior project over the summer, we were farther ahead on our senior projects than the rest of the seniors. It was nice to be done with our senior project once school started so we could focus on our hard subjects in school. I would recommend future seniors to start their senior projects early so they do not have to cram it in at the end of the

quarter. I would also tell future seniors to do something they enjoy because they have to spend a lot of time doing their senior project. Thankfully I enjoyed Christ Camp so the time flew by.

Christ Camp has stretched me emotionally and intellectually. Emotionally I have realized how truly blessed I am. Seeing the young children at Christ Camp come in with their grandparents made me think about how privileged I am to have my two wonderful parents. Intellectually Christ Camp has helped my social skills with children. I also had to refresh my memory on common Bible stories so I could share them with the people that came to Christ Camp. Since Pastor Sean was our mentor, I was able to ask him intellectual questions before and after Christ Camps to help build my faith.

Compared to other similar projects, I believe Christ Camp was successful. It is hard to compare Christ Camp to similar projects because I have never been involved in something exactly like Christ Camp. Vacation Bible School is able to be compared to Christ Camp, but I think Christ Camp was much more personable and engaging. A child at Christ Camp was able to choose what they wanted to do instead of being corralled with ten other kids by one teacher. I hope the children that came to Christ Camp will remember their experience and come back next year.

We didn't face many problems, but one problem was that kids were not coming over to the gym where Christ Camp was being held. We handled the problem by going over to the food pantry and talking to families with kids. Once a family would decide to bring their child or children over to Christ Camp, other families would decide to come too. Everything ran smoothly at Christ Camp, and we did not have any other major problems. If I could redo the project, I

would find better ways to advertise Christ Camp. Otherwise, I would do the project exactly the same.

Christ Camp was a completely original idea. Hannah and I started Christ Camp from nothing. We came up with the idea, planned all the activities, and were creative with the crafts and food to fit them with the scheduled themes. Hannah and I wanted to make sure to positively influence the community with what we believe in. Because Hannah and I put so much effort into our unique Christ Camp, I believe we deserve a high A. Hannah and I were both rewarded with priceless values after accomplishing Christ Camp.