


Advanced Standing Essay

It took me awhile to decide on a major. I have always wanted a career that would allow me to work with people and help them. After I come home from work every day, I want to feel like I have accomplished something and made someone else's life better. Social Work was in the back of my mind and it fit perfectly. I know being a social worker can be a very rewarding career and I am excited to get started in the program.

What really sparked my interest into becoming a social worker was volunteering at the YCC (Your Community Connection). This center has five interest areas: children and youth, community, crisis support, homeless and housing, and women. When I volunteered there I worked with the children. We did different activities with them, enabling their mothers to have a break. The kids were really sweet and it was fun to play with them. When it was time for them to go home, they did not want to leave. This indicated they were enjoying our time together. After a few times meeting with them, I felt like I was starting to have an impact on their lives. It felt good to serve and I feel like I learned more from them than they learned from me.

Being a social worker requires working with diverse individuals, cultures, and backgrounds. I think I could work well with these individuals. I have a brother-in-law that is from Brazil who has been a part of my family for five years. I have learned about his culture throughout the years and encouraged him while he has been learning English. I also have a sister-in-law from Puerto Rico. Throughout my childhood and adolescence, my parent's house has been a home for many foreigners. We had three foreign exchange students from Japan come during the years. We also hosted two men from Scotland who were visiting for the 2002 Winter Olympics. *and* We also hosted two men who were participating in the "Up With People" program. Jorge was from Luxembourg and Dan was from a polygamist family in Big Water, Utah. During these visits I was friendly, helpful, and considerate of our guests. I was open-

mindful to their different religions, values, and beliefs. I think that it is fun and interesting to meet new people and learn about diverse cultures. I feel that having these individuals in my family and home has broadened my horizons and made me become more aware of people in different situations and culture backgrounds.

A few years ago my grandpa lived with my family because he was getting too old to be on his own and take care of himself. I helped him with many tasks, but most of all I was there to be his friend and so he could have someone to talk and laugh with. Throughout these few months our friendship was strengthened. I know he enjoyed it, but in the end I think helping him changed and strengthened me the most. It is amazing how good it feels to give service. I love that feeling. I hope that as I become a social worker I can give help and assistance and have a feeling of self-worth and accomplishment.

My friends and family have different opinions about my decision to become a social worker. They think that it will be a challenging career and it can be emotionally draining. It takes a lot of dedication and hard work. However, my family and friends are excited that I have chosen a profession that I am good at and will succeed in. My mom has told me that even since I was young I had a desire to be around people and had a craving to solve their problems. She says I am understanding, a good listener, nonjudgmental, and genuine. I want to take these qualities and use them in my profession as a social worker.

The field of interest I want to work in is Family and Children Services. I am minoring in Family and Human Development. I love children and want to be able to help them and make their lives better. I want to focus on foster care and adoption or prevention of child abuse and neglect. I have had experience working with children when I worked at an elementary school. I was a reading tutor and worked with children from kindergarten to third grade. It was fun to get to know the kids and build a relationship with them. I enjoyed watching them progress and become better readers. There is

something about helping a person and witnessing a transformation of them as they improve. I hope to witness transformation of clients and helping them improve as a social worker.

For years my family has volunteered at the Weber County Library Holiday Open house on Christmas Eve. At this event, low-income families and individuals who are homeless come enjoy a meal, entertainment, and receive socks, hats, and gloves. The patrons were always friendly and appreciative of our service. This has been one of my favorite family activities around Christmas time. It brings joy to provide this service. It was especially enjoyable to be able to share this experience with my family. Everyone should be shown respect and acceptance and at this event this is achieved.

I have also volunteered at The Family Summit Foundation- a Center for Grieving Children. This is a support center for children, teens, and their families that are grieving the loss of someone they love because of death, divorce, or separation. This center also helps children who are in foster care, children and teens experiencing complicated grief, and those with anticipatory grief. We did different activities with these children. It was exciting to see the children forget about their worries and enjoy the hour or two we had with them.

Serving others brings much joy and happiness into my life. When I serve others, I develop a love for them. Service also gives a feeling of self-worth. I want to have a career that is centered on service. I know that as a social worker I will have my strengths and weaknesses. I will need to take responsibility for my actions. This includes my achievements and success, as well as my mistakes and failures. With the help of my fellow colleagues and supervisor, we can work together as a team and become better social workers. I will remain comfortable when I am presented with new views and opinions. To do this, I need to familiarize myself with different principles and stay up to date with the news and what is happening around the world. I am eager to start the social work program so I can practice my skills that will help me become well equipped to help others and encourage a better life for them.