

July 4th, 2008, my sister, Madison Diana Greenberg, passed away at the local hospital. This heartbreaking day was followed by the greatest demonstration of community I have ever experienced. Family and friends gathered in support by sending cards, making meals and planting a memorial flower garden in our yard. It is from this experience, that I can understand the impact of community service first-hand. My family and I appreciated all the generous thoughts, sacrifices of time and tremendous effort made on our behalf. As a result, I became dedicated to serving others. For me, service is more than an activity log or a tax deduction, it is a Lifestyle.

Through my volunteer experiences, I have learned a multitude of skills. I learned one of the most important skills from my mother: to find a cause I am passionate about and find a way to serve others with it. Her passion project stemmed from her experience as a mother in the NICU. She initiated a small gift program to help local mothers connect with their babies during this difficult time. Being involved with her service project taught me how to be confident in my ideas and courageous when implementing them.

During middle school, I became really interested in donating blood, only to find out that I was not old enough. Nonetheless, I wanted to support the cause. After some inquiry with an advisor, I was able help through alternative methods. By helping out, I learned the tactics of planning, organizing and promoting a blood drive. During this time, I participated by making posters and typing the schedules for the high school blood drive. I also served through the free blood drive breakfast at school. Eventually, I began donating blood, but I was not yet satisfied. After interacting with employees, I discovered that the local blood center could allow for me to donate more often than just twice a year. The more I became involved with the blood center, the

more passionate I became about this potentially life-saving service. Donating blood became my passion project.

Using my mom as a role model, I built up the courage to host an independent mobile blood drive during the summer. As the coordinator of a blood drive, I had the responsibility of networking with local businesses to find an optimal location, create a realistic date and set a time. Upon picking a location, I spoke with the board of directors and wrote applications for the company to approve this request as a community service event. From this experience, I have learned many skills, including professionalism and dedication.

Once the request was approved, I was able to pursue further communication with the blood center and develop a detailed list of requirements for the event. Additionally, I made it my personal responsibility to invite blood donors. Although I could have simply hung posters and created media, I decided to build relationships with community members and personally invite as many donors as possible. This taught me how to interact with a wide variety of people and to personalize each and every connection. Eventually, the hard work and perseverance paid off and the blood drive accounted for 31 donated pints of blood, which saved over 90 lives. The blood center was very pleased with this result, as was the local business who hosted the event. In fact, they have now become a regular mobile blood drive site. Since then, I have continued to participate in various blood donation opportunities, most recently committing to plasma donation as well.

Involving myself with blood drives, as well as other medically related service opportunities, has motivated me to pursue a bachelor's degree of science in nursing. I am very grateful to have discovered my vocation of patient care through community service experiences. I am beyond thankful for the opportunity I currently have, to receive a college education. However, the lessons I have learned through community service are of the utmost value and I will continue to develop them throughout my life. Skills such as communication, professionalism, stewardship and compassion will not only benefit my education, but they will significantly influence my career as a nurse. My future patients deserve the best care possible and through the knowledge and skills I have gained, I will be best able to serve their needs.