

## Volunteer Success Spring 2012 LACC- Sp. 72

### Red Cross:

Initially I was afraid that I would not be able to understand what they wanted me to do there. Fortunately Gwendolyn Parrish explained everything very clearly. I believe my greatest reward was my increase in confidence. In addition, I had used computers back in El Salvador, but I learned to do them on an American computer system--I can now say I learned to organize documents on them. I was really surprised when I got my positive evaluations, I knew it couldn't be just because she liked me but I had actually improved. Best of all at the end, I was given this really special pin that "I am a Volunteer for American Red Cross". Anna P.

### Braille Institute.

My biggest concern was how I would be able to communicate with the blind students at the Braille Institute. Yes, the first day was a bit hard, but after the 2<sup>nd</sup> time, I learned so many more vocabulary words. I don't have one greatest moment, "Every day was a great day there. " I worked in the basketry class and helped the students make the most beautiful baskets. I was amazed how creative these people were. I also witnessed them make art projects with newspaper. I was taught all sorts of words to describe colors, taste and even learned to give directions. I was also able to speak more slowly and learned to open up my mouth more to be understood. Most amazingly, before I was very shy. I saw the changes and am happy to see how much better my English has become. At the end I felt I became more comfortable speaking with all types of people. Lesly G.

### 826 LA

My greatest experience was working tutoring elementary and high school students. I had previous experience working with foreigners but never had such an experience to work so closely with Hispanic people. I never had the experience of being a teacher. My greatest joy was working with these innocent young children I was so impressed by the way they practiced such good manners. I forced myself to speak a lot as I wanted to improve my verbal skills. I also got to work with volunteers who were native English speakers who spoke perfect English. I gained a lot of confidence because I had to listen to what they told me. I learned how to break into a conversation. I had to give instructions on their homework. I needed to ask them about their homework and have them explain it to me. Last I told them what they needed to do. I learned many new skills from 826LA. I had done volunteer work before and initially wondered why I needed to repeat it—I am glad I did. I had the greatest experience in 826LA because Prof. Kahn introduced me to volunteer work. Ji W.

### LA City Childcare Center

I had never done volunteer work before as a teacher. This was the 1<sup>st</sup> time in my life to work with children. I was worried whether they would listen to me or not. Would I be a good teacher?. I was amazed when I interviewed the teachers and knew they would be incredible assistants. My greatest reward was working with the small children. I found a special affection for these innocent children

which were my reward. The one thing I told them, “They will grow up and do great things in their lives. They will be good children and take care of their parents. “My English improved immensely by talking to children about the foods they eat at home, the toys they play with, their pets and at the end I liked to see the smile on their faces. I learned a lot about finding the exact world to teach them so they could better understand me. Francisco M.

#### Frank de Olmo Elementary

I had volunteer at my daughter’s school last year and I decided to return to do this project .I had no problem communicating with children, my fear was explaining the assignments provided by the teachers. This was a different style of speech than I normally used. My greatest memory was reviewing with the students and they kept asking me question without the restriction of certain words. I knew at that moment—I was in the right place to learn and practice my English. I found the greatest reward working with pre-school kids is they never cared about what they wanted to say, they always stated what was on their mind to those around them. I felt my English improved as I no longer tried to translate my language to English. I recommend that all ESL students to volunteer work at an elementary school.

#### Aids Project LA

I worked at this project helping prepare bags of food for the clients. It greatly increased my vocabulary as I had to learn the ten types of breads and the various names of different fruits and vegetables that I didn’t eat in my home. I was impressed with the chance to speak with all sorts of native English speakers. First I was shy, but I later learned a great deal. It was easy work. I had a good experience and I was especially happy I can help someone else in their life. Sun C.