

My Community Service Project

By Serena Brewer-The Athenian School (Danville, CA)

The high school I attended required seniors to design and complete a community service project. My project stemmed from my love of teaching skiing and a unique opportunity that came from a phone call with my dad.

My dad was a school superintendent for a school district near the mountains. One of his schools offered alpine and cross-country skiing to fourth to eighth graders for P.E. credit. The school had a class for Down syndrome kids. I asked if the kids from this class got to go skiing. When my dad said no, I instantly knew what my community service project would be. Most kids who have this syndrome have enough motor coordination to participate in activities like skiing. I wanted to give these kids a chance to have fun in the snow and maybe even ski.

After overcoming his initial resistance, my dad put me in contact with the woman who taught the class for students with Down syndrome and with a family that might be willing to let me work with their kids. I created an outline of what we would do and how I would teach them. I met with the teacher and the family. I convinced the local ski resort to donate ski rentals and access to the rope tow and beginner's area. It turned out that the kids didn't remember much from one lesson to another. But they did experience something new and had fun.

My high school was one of a group of schools around the world that emphasize community service. The head of my school submitted my project in a competition. I was amazed when I was chosen to receive an international community service award for my project.

Community Service Project

Goal or problem: Designing a community service project to meet graduation requirements.

Obstacles: Convincing people that students with Down syndrome could learn to ski and enjoy the snow just like other elementary students; obtaining free ski rental and ski passes.

Time Frame: Three months (January-March)

Outcome: Five Down syndrome students were able to experience skiing; community service award received.