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Outreach Observation

 Earlier in the semester, the softball team and I went to White Bird Appaloosa Horse Rescue to volunteer. The point of this trip was to get involved with the community, and from what I heard, the softball program does this at least once every year. I was very excited to go to this specific place because it is a horse farm and I absolutely adore horses. While there, we mucked out stalls, refilled food bowls with specific food depending on the horse, and washed out the water containers so the horses could have fresh, clean water. Because we seemed to work so well with the horse, normal and miniature, the owner decided to allow us to lead the horses from the pasture back to their stalls. I actually got to do this by myself, mostly because when I was younger I rode horses. I do not remember the name of the horse I led, but it was really a pony. After getting her back into the stall, some of the other girls and I were allowed to brush her down with the different brushes, and just let me say, there are like five different brushes to be used at specific times. Once we all finished brushing our horses, we left the stall area to go see what the other group was doing. We met at a field where the other half of our team was cleaning hay out of pasture and loading in into a tractor to be moved out of the field. When they finally finished doing that, which took them longer than my group’s jobs, the owner brought a horse into the pasture. This horse was being prepared to be sold and needed to learn how to be around a lot of people. He sent in two people at a time to go and brush the horse and after a while, they left and the next two entered. This continued until everyone on the team was acquainted with the horse. Besides the horses, we also saw and pet cats, because every farm has to have cats that catch the mice which try to eat the horse’s grain. The cats were very nice and definitely loved all the attention. Sadly, soon after meeting the horse we all had to pack up and leave because there was nothing left for us to do. So we took a picture, because we always take pictures, and drove on home. We stayed there helping out about three hours and it was a great experience.

 When we were told about the volunteering trip, we were given two options: the ASPCA or the horse farm. Honestly, both of those options are with animals so either was perfectly fine with me but the team wanted to go to the horse farm. Obviously, we all love horses. This experience was great not only because of the horses, but because we got to learn about the farm and their daily routine, which is a lot. We also learned that many of their horses were rescues and that makes everything a little bitter sweet. Some of the horses could never be ridden again, which is sad to me. I helped out someone in the community which just is a great feeling. Knowing something you did helped someone else is awesome. This experience definitely opened my eyes to doing more volunteer work with animals, since I never have before. Most of my volunteer work is done with softball because it is easy for me to do that. I would definitely be willing to return and help out some more.

 Community service is important to the community for many reasons, some obvious, others not. I think it is important, especially for Longwood students, because it makes us become connected with the community more. We live in a small town that is in need of some help, so why not give a little? There are so many options out there for anyone, no matter how your tastes differ from others. Plus, volunteering can help you meet new people, from your school or just among the town people. I personally like to volunteer with children or animals. Children because I love to see their eyes light up when they do something right (plus they usually start to view me as a role model which I just think is awesome.) I wish I could do the after school help with the children we learned about in LSEM, but I do not think I have the time. Animals is a little bit different. I like to volunteer with animals just because they are so cute and I love to play with them. Community service not only betters the community but also betters the volunteers by making them become better citizens. The more someone interacts with those in need, the more likely they will be to help out others in the future, which is important. People need to remember not just to volunteer because someone made you, but because you want to help others.

 Honestly, I wish I could volunteer more often. I would love to just go down to the ASPCA and pay with the animals and help out where I can. Balancing school, honors, and softball kind of gives me a hectic schedule though, and when I do have free time I tend to take naps and try to relax. Volunteering, while sometimes strenuous work, is actually very relaxing to me. Knowing that I helped someone makes me feel better about myself, like I did something that was not required of me and I did it out of the goodness of my heart. That feeling is one of the best you can get, and I wish others would get it as well. Volunteering is a great way to get out there and experience life while also helping those in need, and it is something I plan on doing at least once every year throughout my college career.