

I am also very happy that we did the little blurbs about what we loved about Marion. I think that really allows the people that visit it to see that we aren't just students of OSU Marion, but we are also people that live in and love Marion as well as visitors to Marion that have learned to love the community.

-Sydney Harris

After participating in this project, I learned that the community of Marion seems to be a relatively productive and loving community. Before I moved to this area, I had heard a lot of bad connotations connected to Marion. Although the more that I interact with the community, the more that my view changes. Of course there are concerns in Marion, like the low reading rate, just like any other town. Although there are lots of people working to benefit the community. Also these people are aiding them to pursue better for their lives. I think this is one of the biggest confirmations that I will take away from my multiple experiences of service work in Marion.

-Rylynn Feaster

I found it surprising how easy it was for me to be able to open up more, and engage in all of the parts of the project with my fellow students. I am more of a shy person, so being able to have a safe environment where it was not overwhelming, and I was able to contribute was amazing. Most classes do not foster this type of support within such a short period of time, and I am grateful to the students, teachers, library staff, and children that we worked with that made this possible. It was truly a special experience being able to give the project my all, work with some truly amazing people along the way, and give back to the area of Marion

-Abigail Smith

Even though it was very cold, wet, hailing, and windy on the day that I needed to construct the book pages on the tallgrass trail, it was still a fun experience altogether. I got to work with other classmates who also signed up for the community service role and also got to have a little bit of a taste of what it is like being a parent. As a parent, it is their job to make sacrifices for their children for their overall growth and happiness. Since the weather was not cooperative that day, we could have all given up on the project and moved on with our lives. Instead, we decided to stay and to sacrifice our time and discomfort to make other people happy.

-A.J. Bennett

this experience has given me the drive to do more within my own community. Not because I want to help those who are less fortunate than me, or to have it on a piece of paper. But because communities work best and thrive when they are sown into, and when they give to the people in them. I feel honored to be able to work with the Marion community to further the literacy development of preschoolers in the area. Many people come up with excuses on how they are not able to engage in their community and to try to make a difference, but through this course, I was able to see how when everyone works together, we can make a change within a short period of time

-Abigail Smith

About their reading experience at storytimes:

What I found the most surprising from this experience was the fact that the children gave me a hug after reading the stories to them. This surprised me because I did not think that the children would be as appreciative as they were for the service that I did for them. I was expecting the children to not pay much attention to what I read to them and to play around while the stories were read to them. Going to the YMCA twice this semester to read to children who go to preschool was a wonderful experience.

-A.J. Bennett

Working with the Marion Library to aid in storytime and to help create the Book Walk displays, I learned the importance of reading to children at a young age. Reading to children for at least 20 minutes a day greatly boosts children's vocabulary and overall learning of language. Specifically, doing the storytime taught me how to read to younger children in a way that is fun and engages them in the story. This was one of the more challenging aspects of this course for me because previously I would just simply read the words on the pages when reading to children.

It was hard for me to get out of my comfort zone and try to make sounds and ask questions such as "What do they think will happen next?". I am grateful for this experience because it taught me how to be more theatrical and engaging when reading to my nieces and nephews to make reading fun for them.

-Molly Quinn

The best part about my experience reading to the children was that I was expecting the children to really struggle with understanding the concepts or words of the books. Knowing now that children can pick up language from just listening to adults makes me realize that even though these children may not have been read to since birth (some may have been) they were able to understand the concepts and larger words I was reading. The preschoolers could answer my questions and caught me completely off guard when they knew the answers. I did not initially give them the credit they deserved.

-Mallory Saltar