

THE LEARNING COMMUNITY

a public charter school



STORIES OF SERVICE



ServeRI Rhode Island
Department
of Education



Jen DeGrace

My Story Of Service

My name is Jen, I am an AmeriCorps Education Fellow. I have various grade level reading groups during the days. One specific group has had an impact on me, which was the second grade sight word group. We would meet three times a week and I was responsible to be there each time and teach the students at least 2 different words within twenty minutes I had. I taught the students the new word, we spelled it together and practiced using it in a sentence.

Eventually I was teaching them six different words a day and we ended the quarter with 47 different words learned! With these inspiring students, it showed me their love for learning and showed me their wonderful and amazing progress. I'm extremely proud of those second graders!

I started this service with a lot of school-student experience as an Teacher Assistant and I have learned beyond what I could imagine myself doing. I knew about planning, time management and working with different grade levels throughout the day. This experience has taught me that furthering my education as a Reading Specialist is what my calling is. Setting personal and professional goals has helped me to reflect on myself throughout my time serving and has helped me achieve my goals and I appreciate that very much! This service has opened up my eyes and challenges me to achieve goals and more inspiring goals.



Aishly Torres

My Story Of Service

I never thought I would be here and working with kids that range from the ages 5 - 15 and remembering their names. During my time at The Learning Community, I started off with helping students in math and added English Language Development towards the middle of the year. While helping the students, I have been able to connect with them. I have learned how to do math in different ways that I didn't necessarily understand at the time, but with the help of students and teachers I have gotten the hang of it. While supporting students, I learned that each student learns differently and they are willing to learn how their peers learn too.

It's not always the learning and teaching for me but being able to be there for a student no matter what. Sometimes they just need someone to be there and understand them. I have gotten to help translate for students who only speak Spanish and are trying to learn English while learning the material at the same time.



Sophia Wright

My Story Of Service

When I started my first day as an AmeriCorps Education Fellow at The Learning Community in August 2019, I was met with a uniquely special team of AmeriCorps coworkers, a warm Learning Community staff, and an extremely well prepared and supportive AmeriCorps Supervisors. These people have shaped my experience at The Learning Community over the course of the past 7 months of service. Through the challenges presented, in teaching, life, health, and through the rigor of engaging authentically with elementary through middle school age students, these folks have kept me grounded, advised me on the best course of action and offered formative feedback on my own lessons and work.

I became an AmeriCorps Education Fellow in order to decide if I should go back to school to become a teacher. Although I have not yet been able to answer this question, my time as an Education Fellow has been a significant learning experience, and key to determining the next step in my professional journey. From the nerve-wracking first day of school, supporting a new group of young people whom I had never met before, to this day where myself and my students have settled into a routine -- I have watched our relationships strengthen and I have begun to understand just how much an influence my presence can have a group of fast growing and bright young learners.



Izzy Okunlola

My Story Of Service

My year of service has been one of the best positions I've had in the education field thus far. The memory that stands out the most during my year was coaching the boy's basketball team. I was able to build great relationships with middle grade students and it was a really fun experience for us all. Apart from coaching, I have been a math support for classroom teachers, and also have worked with students in small group spaces for middle grade extensions to work on math skills. Tutoring in math has been an enriching experience because I have picked up different strategies in math that I didn't know before.

I like how math teachers at The Learning Community place an emphasis on reasoning and understanding logical connections between operations, instead of just computing algorithms. I am very grateful to The Learning community; not only have they provided a comfortable environment as a workplace, but they also helped me a lot with personal issues that I was experiencing during the beginning of the school year. I am often impressed with the thoughtfulness and due diligence that this school strives to provide for students, staff members, and families.



Giselle DaSilva

My Story Of Service

My year of AmeriCorps service has given me a great appreciation for what The Learning Community does. Immediately, I was amazed by the amount of resources the school provides for its students and teachers. Although AmeriCorps Education Fellows are not permanent faculty of the school, we were able to participate in the student's entire school day and constantly receive gratitude for our work. I have previously worked in before and after school care and have never seen a school that treats every member of its team so well. Also, I believe the Education Fellows were given the tools and connections to succeed as much as possible during our year at The Learning Community. We are given an office space, a laptop, and access to all of the teaching supplies the school has. Additionally, we are also assisted in planning our lives after our year of service. I also noted how The Learning Community was unique in its approach to teaching, always emphasizing respect and service to its students.

I am proud to be a part of The Learning Community by supporting students across various grades in math. I enjoy many of the student's upbeat personalities, determination, and intelligence. I believe these students will go on to achieve their maximum potential thanks to the investment The Learning Community has made in their students.



Fio Alonzo

My Story Of Service

AmeriCorps was a totally foreign concept when it was first introduced to me. I'd always had the notion that I needed to go to college straight out of high school and had never even heard of gap years until my senior year. So, when circumstances demanded that I wait to start college, I was left feeling lost and unsure. Watching my friends get accepted into colleges and make plans to begin their education made me wonder if I would fall behind in life. However, after just a few months of service I feel so far ahead of the game than I would've ever thought.

Starting out I was afraid to stumble as I learned to navigate my first time in a school where I was no longer the student. As the year progressed though, I have been lucky enough to learn so many skills that have helped me understand the career path I'd like to go on. The professional development I received, and the support, from both supervisors and coworkers, have made me more confident in my ability to excel in more challenging opportunities once my service year ends. The relationships that I have built with students have shown me how much change my efforts can make. Having students feel comfortable enough to confide in me who they are and how they are feeling and being able to help them manage those thoughts and feelings has shown me how much I've grown as a person. It has shown me that I am capable of helping others, and how good it feels to help. I am so glad that I was able to take this year off, and so grateful for my time in service.



Heejae Yang

My Story Of Service

I am very grateful that I was able to serve as an AmeriCorps Education Fellow at The Learning Community. As an Education Fellow, I teach reading groups two to four times a week to students in kindergarten, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh grade. It is a privilege to work with the same children regularly and to steadily see their progress. Every day, we read a different book, except for book club, where the children read one chapter book for several weeks. We've read horror stories, biographies, expository texts about animals and places in the world, and more. The insight we gain into the cultures and habitats around us through reading is fascinating. My hope with these reading groups is to not only help them develop skills to become better readers, but also to instill in the children the desire to want to know more about this captivating world we call home.

It is also very rewarding to get to know the students through the reading groups. It is much easier to build relationships in these smaller settings of one to four students. I appreciate that I can get to know their personalities. Children laugh so easily and are so curious about life.

The staff at The Learning Community definitely creates an environment where children can thrive and feel supported. There is never a dull moment in my reading groups. If I had to pick one thing among the hundreds of things I've learned during my time of service, I will say with assurance that I will always remember how the children made me feel. They have nourished me with their passion, joy, curiosity, mischievousness, energy, humor, and inquisitiveness. Thank you!