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[FROM A YOUTH VOLUNTEER](#)

[2024/10](#)

I've been volunteering events that help children in need. This summer I started participating in bucket drumming lessons with special needs kids. I traveled to their center to teach them how to do the drumming. The session began with a review of previous lessons, including producing different sounds by striking the bucket's center, rim, and side. The participants then practiced

varying tempos and counting beats. To add an element of fun, we led a "Red, Yellow, Green" game where participants practiced soft and hard beats and stopping on command. The session concluded with participants playing along to the rhythm of a popular song, reinforcing their skills in a joyful manner.

Volunteering gives me a sense of purpose. I felt happier because I knew my cause had a positive effect on others, especially those special needs kids in the community.

Being a part of Alyus organization makes me feel a sense of purpose- that I'm not there for nothing, but instead for a good cause. That's another thing I love about volunteering- it gets you motivated to do more when you know your efforts are going to pay off.

FROM THE INSTRUCTUOR AT LSA SPECIAL NEEDS CARING CENTER

2024/09

Every summer, our campers eagerly look forward to the arrival of the youth volunteers, who bring fresh energy and enthusiasm to our program. This year's multi-skill teaching curriculum, designed and led entirely by the youth volunteers, worked exceptionally well. The unique, inclusive approach of allowing young volunteers to take charge of the program not only benefited the campers but also created an empowering experience for the volunteers. They met weekly to refine their lessons, ensuring they addressed the individual needs of each camper, and their efforts truly paid off. I had the opportunity to collaborate with the volunteers in designing the curriculum, and it was inspiring to see their creativity and commitment shine through. Watching them grow into leaders while fostering an inclusive, engaging environment for our campers has been a rewarding experience for everyone involved.

FROM A PARENT WHO ATTENDED THE PEARLAND MY PLAYCLUB EVENT

2024/10

My family just attended [My] PlayClub event in Pearland.

I just wanted to email to thank you for the amazing event. The AYLUS [Pearland] members there showed great care, patient, integrity and leadership. I hope my two daughters end up with the these same qualities. Keep up the good work.

FROM A YOUTH VOLUNTEER

2024/08

A particularly memorable experience I had was when I went to help kids with special needs [at the SMILE Camp]. We assisted the kids with things like dance, arts and crafts, and to other fun activities. I remember this one boy named Albert who came to me and sort of "chose" me to be his helper.

Albert was a sweet boy. He had trouble speaking and communicating, so it was not always easy to understand what he wanted. But I adored the wide smile on his face when he saw the finished product of a project he did, or looked back over the paper filled with drawings he made. The joy from his sense of accomplishment was contagious and heart-warming.

This experience touched me in a way words cannot describe. It demonstrated that people with disabilities have emotions -- desire, fear, pride, and love. They are no indifferent to life, and they are just as capable of taking control of their own future as any of us. Their disabilities won't stop them from achieving success.

FROM THE PARENT OF A YOUTH VOLUNTEER

2024/07

One of the most striking aspects of this experience has been witnessing the profound impact of inclusive play on the children. I've seen firsthand how a carefully designed activity can bridge gaps between children with different needs, fostering a sense of team and mutual respect. For instance, during games and interactive learning sessions, children with special needs are not merely participants but active contributors. The collaborative nature of these activities encourages them to interact, communicate, and work together, which can significantly boost their self-esteem and social skills.

FROM A YOUTH VOLUNTEER

2024/06

Throughout my experience working with individuals with special needs, I have gained invaluable insights into their unique challenges and strengths. This journey has deepened my understanding and empathy, allowing me to connect with them on a profound level. I've learned the importance of patience, adaptability, and active listening. Each interaction has taught me how to better support and empower those I work with, ensuring they feel valued and understood. My commitment to fostering a positive and inclusive environment drives me to continuously improve my skills and approaches.

I celebrate their abilities and encourage greater independence, empowering them to thrive. I am passionate about helping individuals reach their fullest potential and look forward to continuing this important work.

FROM THE PARENT OF A YOUTH VOLUNTEER

2024/05

From the very beginning when she [my daughter] volunteered in the SMILE program in 2022 until now, all these volunteering activities have truly helped her immensely. They guided her in discovering her passion and what she's good at. Because of this, she chose special education as her major in college. Initially, I hoped she would pursue science, and we could support her in that direction. But every time she talks about special education, her eyes light up. That's when we knew she had found her true passion.

FROM A YOUTH VOLUNTEER

2022/4

People only do community service for hours." I've heard this quote multiple times—the underlying tone of criticism always undermines the hard work of student volunteers. However, no matter the intention behind signing up for an event, anyone who volunteers for their passions will feel the same sense of fulfillment AS I do. Through AYLUS, I discovered my love for teaching in sixth grade. When the pandemic hit, I didn't do much outside of sitting in front of my laptop all day during online school. However, when my mom suggested I help tutor a couple kids, I thought this was a better way of sitting in front of my laptop. I was nervous at first, but when I socialized with these kids who were eager to learn, I felt rewarded through simply conversing with them. Fast forward a year and a half later, the program developed and it became a hobby of mine. This year, AYLUS provided me with countless opportunities, with my favorite being the SMILE program for the special needs community. Although I was there to teach classes, I learned more from the buddies than from myself—they listened and laughed with me, and were always smiling, which never failed to lighten my mood. Bonding with both students and adults through these two projects gave me a place in the community, along with a passion. The rewarding feeling after a long day of volunteering in the summer is worth the time and effort. I also made many new friends through AYLUS who I look forward to at every event; whether through selling plants, sorting garage sale items, or even learning to coach tennis without knowing how to hit a backhand properly. Helping the local Pearland community unites us together, and the fulfillment and friendship we experience cannot be compared to the couple lines on our resume others think we volunteer for.

FROM A GRANDPARENT WHO VISITED PEARLAND

2024/3

This [Inclusive Park] is the best park I have ever been to, and the event [My PlayClub] is a wonderful experience I have never seen anywhere else. I hope we can have this kind of event everywhere.

FROM THE PRINCIPAL OF ED WHITE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2024/2

I want to take the time to express the gratitude we have for your partnership. As a result of your partnership, our STAAR Meet and Masters level for ELA moved from xxx to xxx (preliminary scores), and Math maintained at about xxx Meet and Masters, but with our 5th graders moving to almost 50% scoring Meet and Masters based on preliminary results.

FROM A JUNIOR MEMBER

2023/7

Although the type of community service I can participate in is limited due to my age [as an

elementary school student], I still enjoy the activities such as garage sale, plant sale, etc. Earlier this month, I got a job to design a banner for the Pearland branch using the AYLUS logo. I first hand drew the idea on my iPad and explained to my mom what it means. Then my mom helped me to lay out the design in PowerPoint. I thought it's a cool design, but I didn't expect to win the competition. But mom told me yesterday that my design got 2nd place and she's very proud of me. I am so happy that I am able to use my artistic talent for something good. When my mom asked me if I am interested in selecting photos to create the annual AYLUS calendar, I said "Yes, please sign me up!" I enjoy working with other kids as a team and completing the project together.

FROM A YOUTH VOLUNTEER

2023/5

Doing community service gives me a sense of purpose: a feeling that I am needed and valued in this world. For example, at the Rien Cup [Karate Competition], the volunteers there helped the staff to separate all the participants and to prepare them for the tournament. We had many tasks to do, including sorting out the papers, checking for attendance to make sure all the participants were there, as well as bringing all the attendees to their rings so they could begin their tournament. I actively helped throughout the entire shift which made me feel like I made a big impact and that everyone there valued me and my contributions.

FROM A YOUTH VOLUNTEER

2023/3

A specific event that shows how community service has impacted my mental wellbeing is when I organized and participated in the AYLUS Pearland Free Health Screening event. At this event, I performed HCV tests to Pearland residents, giving free Hepatitis C tests to residents who came to the health screening event. From this experience, I felt an immense sense of meaning and appreciation, as I was giving back to the Pearland community in a positive way. Furthermore, I was helping people become more aware of the Hepatitis C Virus, which can help save lives and reduce the risk of infection. As a result, this furthered my sense of accomplishment and value while simultaneously improving my self-esteem.

FROM A YOUTH VOLUNTEER

2022/6

Community service has helped me find a great sense of purpose in my life, because knowing that I have an impact on other people makes me feel proud of both myself and those that I help. I tutored at Ed White Elementary two weeks ago, and there I was able to meet an amazing young girl who had just moved to the U.S. three months ago. Throughout my four hours with her I came to know her very well while helping her improve her English. I learned about her hometown and how she came with her mom, and many other stories that she had thought to tell me. She felt discouraged when hearing me speak in English to one of the teachers, sulking about how she could never get as fluent as I was. However, I was able to give her motivation to keep learning and told her that one day she would pass both I and all her peers in fluency. She immediately picked back up the pencil she had been using to practice writing English words, carrying on with a determined smile. By the end of our tutoring session, she had turned from shy and frowning to bright and eager, which made me feel proud of both of us. I was proud of her for opening up and finding motivation to try and overcome her language barrier, and proud of myself for helping a young girl regain confidence in herself while also practicing my Chinese. I have been eagerly waiting until the next time I can meet her, so that I can continue to help her improve and help myself view new perspectives on life. I have these kinds of experiences often when I'm in AYLUS, and I know that no matter how many years pass, they will always stick in my mind.

FROM A YOUTH VOLUNTEER

2022/5

I joined Aylus because I want to help others and contribute to the community. For example, the first project for me is English tutoring. This project aims to help students who are not native speakers to learn English. At first, it was scary and I was nervous. Then over time, I got better prepared and more confident speaking in front of my students. I love making my classes fun

and enjoyable.

Joining Aylus gives me a sense of belongings. Our volunteers are always very nice and welcoming. I feel that I belong to the Aylus family. By joining the cheering group of people, I am happy to be a part of them.

FROM FRIENDS OF WEST PEARLAND LIBRARY

2023/11

Our 2023 Holiday Open House had 800 people in attendance, and the preliminary number for our 2024 event attendance is 1200. This incredible event would not have been successful without the generosity of our sponsors and volunteers...A special thank you to AYLUS for their hardworking volunteers and gifted face painters, who truly enhanced the experience for all attendees... YOU were a huge part of the success of our event. Your smile, your hard work, the photos you shared, your willingness to help made all the difference!

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