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Service Learning Discussion

Introduction:

The purpose of this presentation is to share my service learning experience as a nurse volunteer in my community. I will describe the role and background of the agency I worked with, my role and experience as a volunteer, activities I participated in, and reflection of my thoughts and feelings prior and after my service learning experience.

Agency Description:

The agency where I chose to perform my service learning work was Susan G. Komen. This agency was founded in efforts to support and advance breast cancer research. Through the help and donations of volunteers and sponsors, Susan G. Komen has been a vital part in the efforts to find a cure for breast cancer. In addition to research projects, the agency also provides an outlet for breast cancer survivors and families to share their story, and extensive information and resources for those newly diagnosed with breast cancer, providing information on their diagnosis, treatment, and support. Susan G. Komen is most widely recognized for their annual Race for the Cure taking place in cities all across the United States.

Volunteer Role Description:
As a Susan G. Komen volunteer I was assigned to a local office in my community, where I performed a number of tasks. I provided phone support to those newly diagnosed with breast cancer and helped to navigate them through the multitude of resources and support groups available with Susan G. Komen. After talking and identifying their needs, I would connect them with support groups in the community to help them on their journey to recovery. In addition to helping in the office, I also was able to help with the organization of my community’s upcoming Race for the Cure. I assisted with first aid tent and distributing water for race participants.

**Critical Reflection:**

From the start of my service learning project, I knew I wanted to work with a breast cancer organization. Cancer is a disease that has greatly affected my family, from several immediate family members battling breast cancer, to the recent loss of my father to lung cancer. I wanted to be a part of finding a cure for this terrible disease and decreasing the path of destruction it causes to patients and their families. Initially, I wasn’t exactly sure how much of an impact I could have in an office setting, but I soon found out after the first phone call I made how valuable my time at Susan G. Komen would be. The difference that I could make by simply making a phone call to someone grief stricken by the diagnosis of cancer, and letting them know they were not alone, their community was behind them, and I was there to help provide them with information to help them on their journey was truly priceless. Every person I spoke with over the phone and at Race for the Cure was positive and so very thankful to have this agency to fight for them.

**Synthesis:**

It is my conclusion, the service learning experience proved to be very valuable and a vital piece of the BSN program at Ferris State University. The experience provides nurses the opportunity to use their skills and compassion in their communities for the greater good. Volunteering provides an experience that can’t be taught in
my opinion. Students can see the reward and impact they can make in their community only after they pursue and take part in a volunteer experience that they choose. Volunteering exposes individuals to people, environments, and experiences they may have otherwise never been introduced to. Ultimately, I believe volunteering reinforces the compassion inherent to the nursing profession. Compassion cannot be taught, and is why we chose nursing as our profession, because of the desire to help others.

**Recommendation:**

I would recommend every nurse be afforded the opportunity to volunteer in his or her community. Whether volunteering with an agency of interest, church, or school, the opportunities are endless and available for every nurse to make a difference. The experience is rewarding and beneficial beyond words. Susan G. Komen provided me with the opportunity to join my community’s fight against breast cancer, which is near and dear to my heart.