

Veiled Possibility of OCU

Seiji Teruya

This summer vacation, I joined two volunteer activities which were organized by this university. I went to a foster home in Yonabaru and a child medical care center in Naha. There were also other students from OCJC's department of early childhood education and care, but I was the only one from the English communication department at both volunteer activities. I found the child care students were so active and took advantage of the skills they had learned in their classes, unlike me. That made me think how powerful it would be if we had opportunities to output what we learn and to do so, we need more support from school.

First of all, unlike students of OCJC, students of OCU can receive less benefit from doing volunteer work. One of the reasons is the credit conversion system that currently exists. Usually, if a student serves for more than 30 hours through volunteering, it's recognized as a credit. But, somehow, it doesn't apply to students of OCU. In fact, 25 students from OCJC took part in various volunteer activities through this September to the beginning of October, while the number of students from OCU was only one. Despite Over 100 volunteer requests coming into the student department in a year, the participation-rate of OCU students are way less than OCJC students. However, credits may not be the only reason.

Another reason which keeps the students away from volunteering is that the profits from volunteer activities is less focused. It seems like students tend to care about filling up the blank spaces on their resumes rather than what they can earn from volunteer experience. It's not to fill up resumes but to have opportunities to improve their skills outside of the classes. To prove it, I compiled a short questionnaire and conducted it randomly among students from both OCU and OCJC who had done volunteering before. All of them answered that either they felt they got involved into the community or they could put what they had learned into

practice during the volunteer work and make use of those experiences in the classes even after the volunteering. Also, according to the report which was published by CNCS (Corporation National & Community service) in 2005, in the United States, students who periodically serve their community tend to have a higher GPA score. They cover various types of volunteering, being based on their major, such as sports, art, education, environmental conservation and so on. So, volunteer fields can transform into an amazing chance to output and brush up students' skills out there in the real world.

However, it won't only be for students, it'll also be profitable for schools as well. Because, students' activities can be a good way to build a tight connection with local region. Recently, the social responsibilities of organizations, including schools, are getting bigger and bigger. Consumers or local residents expect companies to be responsible and involved in the locality. That's why there are more fair-trade products, appearing in super markets and more charity-activities are conducted by private companies than ever before. Also, to organize volunteer requests helps students keep away from so-called black volunteering which aims to use students for its profitable activity by pretending it's for charity-activities. It's difficult for us to see if it's malignant or not. So, supporting students can actually be good for the school as well.

Therefore, we need more support from school to get involved into volunteering to keep up and be aware of the importance of putting our learning into action. If it's possible, we can create an ideal system between the school and students. Some people may say that we should not think about getting something from volunteering. They are probably right. According to the Oxford university dictionary, one of the definitions of "volunteer" is this. "A person who does a job without being paid for it." That sounds too ordinary and unattractive. If I could redefine the meaning of "volunteer," I guess I would say "A person who takes action for others as a peacemaker."