

Allysa Klene

MiT Application

Resume

**Prompt:** Provide specific details about all of your experiences working with young people, especially those from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds.

I've worked with young people during my volunteer experiences and in my employment. While volunteering with Habitat for Humanity, a majority of my work was at the carnivals running booths and games for the children. Not every child speaks English the same way or at the same level, there are accents and dialects on top of the general kid-talk you run into when energy and excitement are high. Some kids may not speak English at all. Luckily, there is more to communication than just language, and you can pick up on it so long as you understand this fact and pay attention to those you're trying to help. It is simple to rephrase, or gesture, or let the other person explain what they mean. Learn some words from them, ask what they mean or ask them to repeat, it really is okay to take extra time to communicate. This concept is so important in every aspect of life, put in the effort to understand.

I volunteer in my hometown at Tenino High School as well, where I work with high school students on their assignments and projects. Historically there has not been a lot of cultural diversity in Tenino (this is starting to change!), but the economic situation has a huge impact on those living here. 22.9% of Tenino's population lives below the poverty line, which is over double the rate of poverty in Washington State. We have never had the resources schools around us have, and even the resources we do have in the schools are not accessible to every student. When you grow up here, you learn to work with what you have; we're very resourceful, we have to be. I've provided a lot of resources to find scholarships to the students in Tenino, and shared the sites I've used for cheap textbooks to the seniors who are heading to college. Where Tenino is missing supplies or textbooks or study materials, I have been able to find a lot of places online that are easily accessible, and free.

Where I have experienced the most cultural and economic diversity has by far been my job at the arcade in Great Wolf Lodge. People come from all over the place to visit the Lodge, so we have a lot of diversity around us all the time. The experiences I have mentioned previously apply here as well, I've had to learn to be patient and direct my energy towards understanding. Not everyone can spend the same amount of money to play games, and thus some people will walk out with massive prizes, and others only get a few small ones. As employees, there is only so much we can do—we give out extra tickets or extra points, swipe our staff cards to let kids try out games without worrying about their balance. I think this concept applies to both economic and cultural diversity in the educational realm. Not everyone is at the same starting point, some will need extra help than others in certain areas to reach a goal, and that's okay. There are obstacles some students will face that others don't have to worry about, and it is our job as educators to recognize that and provide the support and resources where they're needed.