

Allysa Klene

MiT Application

Volunteer Reflection

**Prompt**

**How has your time volunteering and observing informed your decision to be a teacher?**

As long as I've been able to, I've been volunteering with Habitat for Humanity in Grays Harbor. My family has always spent a great deal of free time helping in events whenever we can. I've always gravitated towards the events involving children—I've done auctions and the Women's Build, but the game nights and carnivals have always been my favorite. It's nice to help with organization and setup, but running the booths and facilitating events for the kids is the coolest. I enjoy showing them how to play the game and seeing them get excited as they try it out. Maybe they'll win on the first try, maybe they need to try again, but there is a prize won regardless. Do all kids follow the rules exactly how I show them? No, they might do it a little differently, and it's completely fine (as long as it doesn't hurt anyone else, y'know?). I like to think that teaching is similar, you provide the tools they need, and they use them in their own way to meet the goals. And hopefully education will be fun for them, just like the carnival. I recently started focusing more on sensory booths, I'm Autistic and can be sensitive to textures, so I have a personal understanding of the importance of stimming and the strong feelings that can come from sensory stimuli, good or bad. I think an understanding of sensory sensitivity is so important, and I'd like to bring that into education more. The environment and people's feelings can really make or break their experience, whether it's a carnival or a classroom.

My mother works in the school district I go to, starting off when I was younger as a paraeducator and moving through multiple different positions. She was in the library, she's a graduation specialist, and she substitute teaches sometimes too. So, growing up I always saw multiple aspects of the school system and got to learn about them. When we were young, we would ride the bus from the elementary school and middle school to the high school, and sit with mom while she finished up work before she took us home. When I got to high school as a student, where I met some of the most influential teachers of my life, I decided I wanted to teach too. I taught a lot of art classes when I was a teachers assistant for our art teacher, and it was some of the most rewarding work I have ever done. I've gone back to the school while in college to volunteer with my mom and other teachers. I love helping students with their work, but it has also been a great way for me to observe. As I've gone through my education I have formed so many ideas on my own role in the institution, and how I can help make a change. The whole scope of education has changed before my eyes, I've been a student during the most recent changes in education (online learning due to COVID), unlike many teachers currently, so I think I, and aspiring teachers of my generation, have a special understanding of how to make use of this change and use it for the better. My whole experience through education as both a student and a leader has inspired me to become a teacher.