

Request-Connect With the Community of People With Disabilities

by

Glory/ Gloria Routson-Gim-Belluardo

Dayton, Ohio

WebQuest Description: This is a Request for volunteers. This quest is intended for students with or without disabilities. Ideally, it could be used in an inclusionary setting or for an after school program or club but the primary focus here is to get kids to think about their futures, set career goals and explore the options available to help them achieve those goals. Transitions are difficult. Consider the challenges Helen Keller faced as you begin by watching the video below of her "Request". Be sure to watch the video in its entirety as the last clip will be especially helpful with your quest.

Grade Level: 9-12

Curriculum: Life Skills / Careers

Keywords: career exploration, inclusion, mission-statement, resume, inspiration, volunteer, transition planning, job search, interviews

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Introduction

This web quest is for those with or without disabilities and for their parents as well. Suppose you had a crippling accident or illness. How would you overcome these obstacles especially in regards to having a fulfilling career? This webquest will help inspire you to answer this question as you view and hear stories through videos about people with greater challenges than you and who have overcome tremendous obstacles. We begin our quest with a look at someone entering a new career. She is an unlikely candidate for a talent contest and certainly doesn't fit the typical description of a star, but her tremendous talent could not go unnoticed. How would your life be changed if your personal story became a song, a movie or book? Your students may have stories of their own that need to be developed into movies. Next, we look at someone who came a long way on his path to stardom. These are my heroes and as you watch and read, they just might become yours as well. I am hoping this helps anyone engaged in a job search. Most importantly, find out how volunteering can open the door to a new career. My Request is for you to join me on the path to discovering your own purpose.

Tasks

Volunteering allows you to make new friends, have fun, help in your community and learn new skills which will help you transition to an eventual job and career. Service to one's community as well as the experience gained by volunteering often lead to lifelong careers. During your time as a volunteer it will be key for you to make regular entries into a journal which you can reference and share both personally and through the social media like Facebook and Twitter. Your task will be to get inspired by the determination of others who face difficulties and challenges, find and use volunteer opportunities in your community to make career decisions, and help you discover your "mission" in life. After viewing the videos below, select the green button marked process; you will learn the processes of letter and resume writing, and master the interview process. You will also be given choices of how you want to pursue this Quest, either alone, with a partner, or in a group. It is a part of a journey, fun adventure. This process could lead to your first job. Good Luck!

Process

There are four levels to this journey. Pick the level which suits you best. For a beginner - Get inspired by viewing the entire webquest by yourself. Respond by writing your thoughts about the quest in your journal. Developing - Get a friend to view the webquest with you. Work with your partner to write reflections and ideas in your journal, about every step. Very Good - Find someone at school or in the community with a disability to join you on the quest. Assign roles, everyone has special contributions, be sure to share the load. There could be a secretary, camera man, time keeper, navigator, writer. Mastery - Form a community awareness group to do the webquest together. Your group might resemble the Oprah's Book of the Month Club or like the Art or Chess Club at school. Have fun, the more the merrier. You could have a President, secretary, Director of Films, Computer Tech. Artist, Fundraising Treasurer. You will gain collaboration skills, and also other skills while you Design your group's Logo, Business Cards, Stationary and other things. This could also lead to creating your own Web Site, Movies, Songs, the Sky is the limit! STEP 1. GET INSPIRED Watch the film clips in each section. Think about what you would like to ask the person in the video. Respond by writing your reactions in a journal, then talk about your feelings with your friends or use the social media like Facebook and Twitter to find out how other people with similar interests and experiences feel. Vision Statement - In your Journal, you should collect goals, volunteer experiences, and other eye opening events. Spend time reviewing these and creating lists. It is good to

list long and short term goals to see where you are on your journey. It is good to realize your own philosophy in life. This could be your vision of your future, your global vision of how you want to shape the world. State an affirmation, such as "I am truly blessed to be of your service." This can be a quote, mission statement, or a comment on life. You might want to extend this by giving the assignment of coming up with a group logo and business cards.

STEP 2 VOLUNTEER Connect with people who share your interests and who would like to get together as a community awareness group to brainstorm and find charities and organizations who need volunteers in your age group. You can spend just a few weeks or the entire summer doing volunteer work. It is up to you. What is important is that you treat these volunteer opportunities just like a job. Be on time and enthusiastic about the work you are doing because this learning experience will go far as you begin searching for a permanent job and career. Find out what your skills are; get on the job training by being a volunteer. Contact at least one of the organizations listed below. Join one or two that are of interest to you and fit into your schedule. Continue to meet with your community awareness group and make posting on social media sites to share new experiences.

(Volunteer work involves asking questions, getting directions and visiting as many locations as possible. I was able to teach English to people from all over the world at Traveler's Aid International. It is really exciting to meet people and share experience using art, pantomime and verse. You may discover you have skills and talents you have not previously been aware of.)

(Volunteer work is a good way to find out whether or not you like this type of work, besides the good experience obtained while volunteering.) (Experiences gained while volunteering can be helpful information to use for college papers and provide on the job training. You may ask for a letter of reference that would help you in your job search.) (Contact agencies such as the United Way, Easter Seals or the Peace Corps, to request volunteer opportunities Use the links below to get started.)

<http://www.steppingstonesohio.org> <http://www.unitedway.org> <http://www.peacecorps.gov> <http://www.travelersaid.org> <http://www.easterseals.com/site/PageServer>

STEP 3 CAREER SEARCH After you have tried various volunteer opportunities, use a search engine to do a career search for the different type of jobs you want to explore. Find out what experience is needed, education needed and pay scale and location. Learn how to write an effective COVER LETTER Put together a list of potential jobs that you may qualify for. The links below will help you create each template, for each cover letter's location and information. The cover letter should state skills you've gained through each job and volunteer position. Be sure to ask someone with secretarial skills to proof read your work. Write a RESUME Request letters of RECOMMENDATION Let your volunteer leader or supervisor know which jobs you are applying for. They will be happy to pass on a good tip to a future contact. Let them know in advance if you will still be a volunteer, and what your future plans with them are. Submit your resume as instructed by prospective employers. Most employers will specify how to apply on their company website under career opportunities.

STEP 4 THE INTERVIEW THE INTERVIEW - Make a list of questions you think might be asked on the interview. Find someone to pretend to be the interviewer. Viewing yourself on video could also help. Practice doing interviews and remember to always be yourself. Don't ask about the pay first. Share some of your volunteer experience with the interviewer or something positive that would make you memorable. Make it a priority to learn something about the company before your interview. Again, most website have an "about us" section to help you get familiar with the company.

FOLLOWUP WITH A THANK YOU NOTE - Always remember to send a thank you note, thanking the person for giving you an interview. Keep the message sweet and simple. Make sure to gather information, ask for their business card or write down the correct spelling of the person's name and address. Art Party-Your group could meet in order to learn how to create your own hand crafted note cards or you can create them on line. This is yet another way to bring the potential employer's attention back to you. You could also coordinate matching stationary to include your cover letter, resume and thank you notes.

<https://www.sendoutcards.com> http://www.princetonreview.com/cte/quiz/career_quiz1.asp Exploring Career Information: [www.bls.gov/k12/Career Profiles: www.wetfeet.com/content/careers.aspx](http://www.bls.gov/k12/Career%20Profiles) Occupational Information Network: <http://online.onetcenter.org/find> Career Briefs: http://careerplanning.about.com/od/occupations/a/career_briefs.htm <http://ohio.gov/working>

COVER LETTER RESOURCES - Find out how to write a cover letter to one or more of your job search selections. <http://www.resumecoverletters.org/coverletter/> RESUME RESOURCES - Create your resume using your volunteer and other experience. http://www.livecareer.com/lp/lcarsmsm31.aspx?tag=120627205957921&hitlogid=108015047&cobrand=CLEAR&tag=120627205957921&utm_source=GAD&utm_medium=SEMK&utm_campaign=Make-Resume-8840 Watch the videos below, to help you in your job search.

Evaluation

Please complete evaluation to rate your performance, and write a reflection in your journal on what you've learned, state the skills you have gained. You might rise to higher levels for another try at possibly requesting others to join you upon your quest the next time. Start an after school club, be sure to share your success stories via journals and or a video camera.

Category and Score	begining 5	developing 10	very good 20	mastery 25	Score
Watch film clips. Respond by writing my reaction in a journal.	I watched some of the film clips. I wrote what I thought.	I watched many of the clips. I responded by writing my reaction to them in a journal.	I watched all of the films. I recorded notes and reaction. I contacted people in my school and neighborhood to find a partner to work with.	After watching, I formed a community awareness group to do the web quest with. We wrote in our journals our brainstorming sessions on how to make connections with those of the same interests via face book and twitter.	Category 1 Score

Category and Score	begining 5	developing 10	very good 20	mastery 25	Score
Volunteer and career search.	I contacted one of the organizations listed, joined as a volunteer for 7-8 weeks this summer.	I contacted all of the organizations, went to tour and ask questions, joined the 2 that were interesting and fit my schedule.	After visits to all recommended locations, my friends and I joined different ones. We will meet once a week to go over events, share our experiences and what we wrote in our journals.	We formed a community club. We go to all of the places and volunteer. We meet weekly to share the stories in our journals and to have fundraisers and recruit more volunteers.	Category 2
After exploration, decide on job, find out requirements, write cover letter, resume, request letters of recommendation. Mail or fax them to jobs.	I created a cover letter, resume and letter of recommendation. I mailed it out.	After I decided which 2 jobs to inquire about, I sent my cover letter, resume and letters of recommendation to both job locations.	I put together a list of potential jobs that I may qualify for. I changed each template for each cover letter's location and information. I have one resume that fits both job descriptions. The letters of recommendation state skills I've gained through each volunteer position.	A secretary, met with our group to proof read and help us perfect our cover letters and resumes. Each member mailed out letters to at least two job employers. We created a group Logo and business cards, so that our club could help other people with disabilities find jobs.	
The interview	I followed up on my letter, I went on a interview.	I practiced answering my interview question list with my freind.Then I went on the interview.	My group had a meeting where we practiced interviewing with one of our parents who is an employer. She went over all interview criteria, such as how to think about what to say, restate questions and how to dress. We also sent Thank You Notes, after having interviews.	Our club met with local members of the Chamber of Commerce. We gave a presentation of our group's volunteer activities of, disability awareness, fundraisers and other achievements. Then they gave us a seminar to conduct practice interviews. We also were given a how to session on: Dress for success, positive attitude awareness, etiquette. We sent Thank You Notes.	
				Total Score	

Conclusion

Now that you've explored career and volunteer activities and planned for your future you should be ready to go forward with confidence. Making connections through volunteer work, web quests and personal encounters are great catalysts for personal growth and fulfillment. We can't just retreat in our shells and hide. We must get out and experience what life has to offer us. Don't feel sorry for yourself. There is always someone with greater challenges than you. "Reach out and touch somebody's hand. Make this world a better place, if you can!" Be sure to visit this site again and again. Be sure to revisit again one year after graduation to let us know how you are doing and to give us feedback by filling out the survey below. My graduates (shown below) taped these segments. Have fun and create your own success stories. Perhaps you may want to join zunal.com to create web quests of your own. It's also fun to browse and there are many wonderful sites to see and visit.

Teacher Page

This web quest evolved from a class I taught to students with various disabilities. It covered writing, goal setting and transition planning. For the web quest I want it to encompass all ability levels. Ideally, typical students need to come together with students with special needs in an inclusive setting. The journal writing and career exploration could take place over a year or as homework assignments. The main thing is for the students to form a social network while doing career exploration and job search. Students with disabilities have been isolated in their communities and need to be included in youth group opportunities. This happens best when initiated by students. Forced efforts never work. I am hoping to spark typical and special students and other teachers into implementing some or all of the ideas in this quest. I am hoping administrators and parents view this as a vital link to and for the community. The best outcome of my Request would be for students to create their own "club" that would meet both on and off campus much like the art, drama, or chess clubs. Some students don't know that they have skills. There are not enough social opportunities available for our special needs population. This is only a seed. I hope it finds roots in the hearts and minds of its viewers. A big part of this process is JOURNALING. The movie, "Freedom Writers" is a very important movie to see about keeping a journal. (Google it if you can't borrow or own it.) The movie shows that it is not important to correct punctuation, spelling and grammar. They just need to find a voice and then use it. The world has been brought together through the world wide web. Please help my people find partners ("peer buddies"). Again, this can't be forced, but informal gatherings are a good place to make these connections. Request the connections. People with disabilities are usually very isolated. Teacher, you might want to extend this by

giving the assignment of coming up with a group logo and business cards. You could even extend it further by writing songs, movie scripts and stories. Your students may have stories of their own that need to be developed into movies just as in the movie referenced above.

Reviews

Reviewed by: Ken ROUTSON

Rate: 4

Review: Gloria did a great job. I especially found the Helen Keller video, as well as, her mother's video inspirational. It is very important to educate the community on how to empower people with disabilities. It is important to emphasize the ability vs the disability.

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Footer

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