A Final Reflection and Synopsis of the Volunteer Tasks at St. Vincent de Paul

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While volunteering at St. Vincent de Paul this past semester, my views of homeless people have drastically changed. Before taking this class and volunteering at St. Vincent de Paul, I viewed homeless people as dirty, lazy, and entitled. I could have not been more wrong about people who are homeless. Now that I think back on my past beliefs of homeless people, I am embarrassed to admit and realize that I used to think like this. After interacting, meeting, and communicating with the guests at St. Vincent de Paul, I have realized homeless people are courageous, strong, and resilient. They are heroes.

For the past several months, I have volunteered in the dining hall at St. Vincent de Paul. My favorite tasks in the dining hall have most definitely been working the food line and being able to interact with the guests at St. Vincent de Paul. Because I did not work actually in the shelter, any communication with the guests was really exciting to me. Just to be able to tell the guests to “have a great day,” or ask them “how are you doing,” was enjoyable for me. Another task I also really enjoyed, while volunteering at St. Vincent de Paul, was delivering the guests’ food plates to their tables. When guests would come in either disabled or with small children, I would deliver their plates to their tables, bring them something to drink, and give them utensils and napkins. I could tell, just this small act of kindness to the guests, would go a long way, because they were so grateful and would thank me.

I enjoyed all of the tasks at St. Vincent de Paul. Because all of the tasks allowed me to interact with the guests, I did not dislike any of the tasks. Each simple task at the dining hall allowed me to learn something new about the guests, their lives, or the work of St. Vincent de Paul. I enjoyed my experience at the homeless shelter tremendously. The people I have met and the experiences I have had this past semester at St. Vincent have opened my eyes to new ways of thinking.