



girl scouts
of virginia skyline

Taylen's Story

Taylen chose to focus her project on older adults; specifically, older adults suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's Disease. During previous volunteer service with older adults, she recognized that agitation was common among those diagnosed with dementia or Alzheimer's. Her outside research found that brain imaging studies show that music can stimulate the brain's pleasure circuit which releases an influx of dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin and other neuro-chemicals that make you feel good. She became determined to figure out a way to create a music program that could be implemented at a local assisted living center for older adults with dementia or Alzheimer's.

Taylen's project advisor was Jonathan Tate, Activity Coordinator, at Warm Hearth. The Administrator and activities and nursing staff at Warm Hearth also assisted with the project. Taylen's plan included purchasing iPods and headphones and uploading music onto the iPods for residents to use. Additionally, she created a training document with a Power Point for Warm Hearth to use with new staff. The project was not without challenges. Uploading the music was time consuming and according to Taylen, "boring" at times, which required her to learn persistence. Often times, the residents she tried to interact with were not receptive or cooperative. And, the initial type of headphone selected didn't work for most of the residents. They were uncomfortable and confusing for the residents to use.

However, when all the pieces fell into place, Taylen saw fantastic results. She witnessed mood changes in residents when they were using the iPods to listen to music. Residents who were normally quiet and withdrawn began to sing along. Warm Hearth has made this project a permanent part of their activities program.

Taylen's Gold Award project really called for her to step outside her comfort zone. She learned to how to develop relationships outside of her peer group and how to start conversations with new people. Taylen also developed a Power Point for Brownie Girl Scouts to inspire them to pursue their Gold Award. She feels that she is comfortable "taking charge" now and that patience, kindness and hard work produce great results. Taylen knows she is a leader now and can be successful in any project she undertakes.

Donations like yours help Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council, Inc. and other United Way partner agencies do meaningful, life-changing work around the New River Valley. When you give to United Way, you help young girls in our community build character and gain the skills they need to live meaningful, vibrant lives.

For more information on Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council, Inc. visit <http://www.gsvsc.org>