



## Communication Students at Western Washington University Reflect on Their Experience Volunteering At BAAY

Nine students at Western Washington University who are enrolled in Doctor Rita Daniels Introduction to Organizational Communication class complete a Service-Learning Project in which students volunteer for dozens of hours in order to gain a deeper understanding about how and where communication exists in organizations. These students, Allynah Foster, Ellie Stevenson, Evan Meyer, Karsten Johnson, Kate Badoud, Kelby Eisenman, May Rodriguez, Nick Lawsen, and S Cowan-Quan investigate why disagreements arise in organizations, and how organizational members can most effectively communicate. ([Kelby Eisenman](#))

### Why Does Baay Look For And Use Volunteers?

BAAY is always looking for volunteers to come in and help out with the difficult task that is running and operating a children's theater program. On top of producing a mainstage show every season, BAAY has outreach programs with the Bellingham School District where K-12 students who otherwise don't have access to theatre arts can experience things like improv, acting, and stage design. [Kelby Eisenman](#)

BAAY utilizes volunteers because the volunteers are contributing their time to help orchestrate an inclusive environment where kids can practice a multitude of performing arts, and volunteers are excited to participate. It also brings the community together, as well as providing the teachers of the classes some relief with helping out. [Kate Badoud](#)

### Why Do We Volunteer?

I volunteered with BAAY because I really liked the aspect of teaching visual art, especially to elementary school students. I am a visual art major as well, so this fit in with my overall studies. [Allynah Foster](#)

BAAY is looking for people who are excited to be there and enjoy the works of a performing arts company. I believe they are looking for enthusiastic, polite, and compassionate people to volunteer at their company. [May Rodriguez](#)

I volunteered with BAAY because I love working with kids and already had experience with teaching from working as a ski instructor. I feel like I learn a lot from working with kids that I wouldn't learn anywhere else. [Evan Meyer](#)



## What Did We Learn?

I definitely felt a few times like I should be paying for the class instead of just volunteering, I learned a lot about lights and props for their theater tech class. [Evan Meyer](#)

I learned more about what can be expected of teaching children in an arts setting. The most important part of this that I gained from my experience was a better understanding of the types of projects elementary school students would be able to complete in an hour. S Cowan-Quan

I learned how to communicate better with students (ranging from 3rd to 5th grade) in a way that is respectful toward them, but also informative. I also learned how to be less serious with art, and have fun showing people how I do certain things. [Allynah Foster](#)

## What Does Volunteering At Baay Look Like?

I volunteered at an improv class at an elementary school. We played games and learned how to work together. The games involved everybody's participation and help so it was a good way to help kids learn how to work together. For example one game was called 3 headed scientist, three kids went up and built off of each others sentences to create a story. [Nick Lawsen](#)

I volunteered at Sunnyland Elementary School. We first set up the classroom for the project, then we took attendance, introduced the project, and then just did art together for the rest of the class time. It was really fun getting to hear the kids interact with each other, but also having conversations with them as well. [Allynah Foster](#)

I volunteered at an improv class at an elementary school. We played games and learned how to work together. The games involved everybody's participation and help so it was a good way to help kids learn how to work together. [Ellie Stevenson](#)

My job was to assist in improv games, make sure the children paid attention, and do any tasks that would require me to leave the room so the class leader could keep teaching. Karsten Johnson

## Was It Difficult To Get Through The Training?

No. I did it for one hour a week and the kids were very energetic, and it was a fun group to work with. The instructor was also very nice and overall it was a great experience [Nick Lawsen](#)

No it was not difficult. Since it was only one hour a week, there was not as much pressure, and after the first week I was able to pick up on how to communicate with everyone pretty quickly. [Allynah Foster](#)

No it was not difficult. Since it was only one hour a week, there was not as much pressure, and after the first week I was able to pick up on how to communicate with everyone pretty quickly. [May Rodriguez](#)

## What Did We Enjoy Most?

I enjoyed being around the energetic group. The kids were very silly and the class had great energy. I enjoyed helping out in the class as best as I could. Nick Lawsen

I enjoyed my time so much that I am going to continue it even when this communication class is over. Allynah Foster

I enjoyed getting to work with children in such a friendly environment. Being able to learn while also making art every week for an hour was fun and rewarding. S Cowan-Quan

## How Can Others Get Involved In Helping?

You can get involved at BAAY by filling out this form: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdeSs\\_U5wjIH4R9y0hN32i2k\\_C\\_c1CBbns8jAJ66BW9jo9sBA/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdeSs_U5wjIH4R9y0hN32i2k_C_c1CBbns8jAJ66BW9jo9sBA/viewform) Kelby Eisenman

I would recommend getting involved at BAAY for volunteering. It was a very easy process and was very organized. Others can get involved by reaching out to the company and see how they can help. Nick Lawsen

They respond quickly to email, and it is also good to register at the Bellingham Public Schools Volunteer Application System. The website for that is <https://bellingshamschoolsvolunteers.myschooldata.net/> Allynah Foster