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## A Trip to Adulthood: College Admission Essay Sample

Akim, Jerusalem. That is where I was sent for the summer by my parents, after they heard that a school for the mentally disabled was in need of volunteers. I appreciated the idea of helping children in need, but was not thrilled about it being in place of fruit smoothies and beach time.

After the long wait to check into customs, I had finally stepped into the foreign country, and was as ready for a summer of working as a child could ever be. The train ride to Jerusalem was filled with bad luck and hugging my broken luggage to ensure my over-packed clothes did not fall out into the crowded streets. Finally having arrived at the hostel, already a half hour late for my volunteer shift, I dropped my suitcase and caught a bus that led me to the place that had already caused me so much irritability.

I made my way up the hill that led to the gates and was welcomed by a lively woman with vibrant clothes and a friendly impression. She led me inside and into the colorful lunchroom where I was greeted by the group of children I would be assisting that summer, receiving hugs and being showed pictures they drew that day. The hesitance I had felt less than an hour ago left completely, and I immediately felt a connection to the children and a responsibility to keep them safe throughout their day.

After a handful of days filled with teaching, laughter, singing and drawing with the children, I took notice of Bina, one of the girls whose days were not filled up the same way mine were, but rather spent looking at the floor. She dismissed the activities, and did not hold conversations with her peers or counselors. In some ways, I was reminded of myself as a child, always quiet and never excited enough to participate in the things children would have otherwise enjoyed. My empathy drove me to try to do everything to get Bina to smile, from trying to draw with her, to playing the music her mother suggested she likes. Her disdain for the school was just too strong to let her do so.

One day, the school hired a clown to perform for the children, as a special treat for a Jewish holiday that was approaching. As all of the children were excitedly approaching the gym to watch this longed for performance, I noticed Bina walking away and sitting in silence in another room. This broke my heart, so I grabbed a ball and rolled it over to her. I didn't say anything to her, as she was always being spoken at, and we just continued rolling the ball to each other. The simplicity of treating her like any other kid warmed her heart, and she was finally ready to watch the clown's performance with excitement in her eyes.

She danced through the whole performance, and when it was over, she ran to me and hugged

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me. Afterwards, another counselor told me that I was the first counselor Bina has ever smiled to, let alone hugged. Never leaving anyone behind, regardless of their capabilities, made me truly realize what it means to be an adult.

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