

## Hope Andrescavage

For the majority of my community service hours at Stockton, I worked at the Salvation Army of Atlantic City. When I first started, I expected to simply serve soup at their daily soup kitchen for roughly 3 hours a day, and then go home. After about a week, I decided to come in for an afternoon to cover for one of my coworkers and work with the “Kid’s Club”, a program that helps keep elementary school students off the streets after school until their parents get off of work. I quickly fell in love with the students and the program, becoming one of the best tutors within my first week. Eventually, even though I wasn’t a full time worker there, everyone started to view me as another one of their coworkers, and it felt like having a second home every day when I came in. I even worked during winter break to help with the Christmas program, and helped over 500 families have a gift-filled, merry Christmas.

In my last month, I worked closely with the “Kid’s Club” department head and a volunteer from another college to create the summer program budget and fill out a few grants. The summer budget was easy enough, as all of us were pretty good at managing money. Filling out the grants, however, was difficult as none of us had ever filled out a single grant in our lives. The best experience I had relevant to that was applying to Ivy League colleges, and even that wasn’t helpful. Over the course of a week, we all put together our best qualities to get the grant done, and now we await to see if the city funds us for new technology. Hopefully, if we get the grant, I will be able to help maintain and run the tech side of the Salvation Army, rather than them having to budget precious funds to it.

The Salvation Army helped me gain a new perspective of the world by serving the Atlantic City community and seeing people at their best and worst. I see how everyone else has a story- all complex, some sad, some happy- that made them who they are today. Everyone we meet, their story is still going on, and we get to choose whether we help them have their best chapter, or continue their worst.