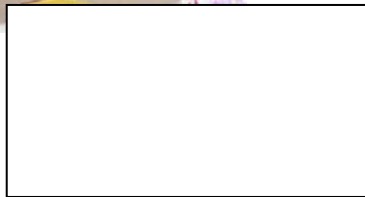


## Debbie Brus—AmeriCorps Fall 2002

### Dubuque Community Y

My first month of AmeriCorps was a great month and a start of a great year. I walked the students back from Bryant or Lincoln to the Community Y. I also worked with some students from Eisenhower. Our time at consisted of playing board games, gymnastics, swimming, and homework. I taught a few science experiments that students really liked. The Community Y's goal is to provide a safe learning environment where the students can utilize their energy since they have been in school all day. One of the highlights of the Y aftercare program was the crafts from Lowes. The students were able to make bird houses with materials and tools supplied by Lowes. It was a great experience.

As time progressed there was a need for teachers in the preschool room. I volunteered my time there. I was a little nervous and intimidated at first because it was my first time working with this age group. As I continued to work with preschoolers I really enjoyed it. It's very rewarding when the students run up to you, give you a hug, and were happy to see you. Another rewarding experience was the first day I met a particular student. He was crying because he wanted his mom. I went over to comfort him and calm him down. The next day he came to me and said, "Miss Debbie, I'm not going to cry and I am going to take a nap today." He was so excited to tell me that and it made my day!



I also worked with the preschool program. Here the kids enjoy lunch after a game of bowling.

Some of the highlights that were enjoyed by the students were being able to see Santa, bowling, swimming, sledding, gymnastics, and playing in the gym. Another thing that was difficult for me was discipline. With the help of the other teachers I was able to conquer this area. The more I worked with the students the easier it became.

Overall I had a very rewarding experience. I learned a lot about myself, gained more self-confidence, and learned patience as I worked with the students. As the year came to a close I remember the relationships I've developed and the friends I have made.