

Maria Passanisi- AmeriCorps Summer 2003

Presentation Lantern

The Presentation Lantern Center was where I spent the largest hunk of my 300 hour term for AmeriCorps. The Presentation Lantern Center is, simply put, a drop-in center for people who are in need of hospitality, educational opportunities, or advocacy. Immediately, I learned that the majority of work that is done at the center is teaching foreign citizens English skills. I did take about four years of Spanish during high school but the skills I had were definitely a little rusty and didn't help much with the concepts we were trying to teach anyway. Throughout the summer, I not only taught English, but I also learned different ways to explain objects, words, concepts, and pictures.



My AmeriCorps partner, Cara, and I made this sign for the Lantern supervisor. It says Presentation Lantern Center in Taiwanese.

Although many of the people who join AmeriCorps during college are education majors, I still feel like my summer working in different places around the community strengthened skills I need in my major as well. Teaching is primarily being able to communicate with the person who is trying to learn. By figuring out different ways of relating to people of different ages and ethnicities, I was able to get a first hand experience of how certain ways of communicating can make a difference in how much people are able to understand. As hard as it was to finally find the best method for each person I worked with, I'm very happy that I was able to experience this program and potentially further my skills for a possible future in communication and education.

The students listen and learn with the story *Say Hola to Spanish* during one of the weeks I helped teach Spanish to 5-8 year old children.

If I had to choose one lesson that dominated my summer, the first thing that would come to my mind is learning how to teach. My major in college is communications and since my two years at school, I have never once taken an education course. When I started my summer with AmeriCorps, I didn't quite anticipate how much thinking it takes to be able to teach someone a skill, whether it be as simple as drawing a picture or as difficult as explaining a concept to someone who doesn't understand English.



This family from Taiwan have studied English for one year and are now beginning to work on grammar and pronunciation.

