

Mary Kitsmiller

5/4/14

Six years ago my mother and I joined National Charity League, Inc. , Colorado Blue Sky Chapter. NCL is a mother daughter philanthropic organization. The past two years I have been volunteering once a week at Holly Creek Retirement Center with my mom working with dementia patients. On a weekly basis we call out hundreds of numbers and letters. Bingo provides the patients with an hour of familiarity. Often times if the patients have some sort of routine in their lives they start to remember better. Bingo is the most difficult yet rewarding volunteer job I have ever done. I have seen tears and anxiety because a family member must leave for the day. I have seen smiles and confusion in a patient's face. I have seen yelling and praying that they live another day. I have seen a certain innocence in their eyes that reflects the innocence of children. The patients at Holly Creek depend on others just like children. They don't understand certain concepts just like children. They worry, they whine, they make up a world to feel something, they love unconditionally, and they forget numbers and words, they even forget what they ate for breakfast just like a child sometimes does. Volunteering has caused me to become a stronger and more patient person. It has made me aware of how important it is to interact with the elderly and to learn from them. The impact on my community has been to honor and respect a generation that has given so much and worked so hard to create the world I live in today. They have taught me to be patient in times of frustration and to love unconditionally because of life's uncertainties.