

# ***REDUCING SOCIAL ISOLATION THROUGH VOLUNTEERISM***

## **Program Evaluation – Year 1 2020-21**



**for Community  
Living Ajax-  
Pickering &  
Whitby**

**by CMCS  
Consulting  
Services**

*This past year has been so tough on adults with special needs. Our son has been frustrated and lonely. It is so nice to connect with someone his own age.*





## Executive Summary

**Based on the survey input of participants, their families and the volunteers involved, the *Reducing Social Isolation Through Volunteerism* program, funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) and sponsored by Community Living Ajax-Pickering and Whitby (CLAPW), was a resounding success in its first year of operation, which began in July of 2020.**

Sixteen participants, sixteen volunteers and thirteen family members responded to the request for input to this evaluation. The participant survey was developed by OTF, and the other two, one for volunteers and one for families, by CMCS Consulting Services, which also consolidated the input and prepared this report.

The *Reducing Social Isolation Through Volunteerism* program involved connecting volunteers, mostly community college students, with people who have intellectual disabilities and who are supported by CLAPW. Because of COVID, this connection was virtual. The participants decided on the activities and the volunteers facilitated them on-line. For this reason, the program in the CMCS surveys was referred to as *1:1 Volunteer Matches*.

The volunteers reported that the activities included watching movies, sports and TV shows, playing games, listening to music, reading poetry and dancing. Families added other details such as speaking Spanish.

Volunteers and family respondents also identified that:

- Participants were able to be involved in activities as often as they wanted.
- There were other benefits for the participants.
- CLAPW prepared the volunteers well for their role.
- CLAPW continued to support both the volunteers and participants well throughout.
- Volunteers and family members also benefited.

Their overall conclusion was that the program was a valuable one.

Participants reported that they reached their most important goal, whether it was feeling less alone, being more connected to their community, having someone to talk to, making more friends or talking to more people.

The one area where there was less than overwhelming concurrence had to do with the fit between the volunteer and the participant in terms of having common interests. However, on this point, several volunteers indicated that not having common interests was not a detriment to their engaging in virtual activities together.

There were only few suggestions for change. One volunteer noted that: *It may help if both individuals are given an idea or short list of things that the person they will be interacting with likes. I think that will already make a*

*ground for introduction and open talking more smoothly.*

A number of volunteers and families provided complimentary comments about the program. One volunteer noted: *“The CLAPW experience was one of the most valuable experiences that I have had and I am grateful for it.”* A family member observed: *“It is a great program and a very worthwhile experience for our daughter.”*

CLAPW also came in for a number of compliments:

- *Sharon Burgess was very helpful and always organized. She responded to any concerns or questions in a timely manner.*
- *Sharon especially helped me be prepared for all the amazing people i would meet by helping explain everything in clear and concise details.*
- *Great job by everyone involved.*
- *CLAPW has done a great job keeping this group occupied during these lockdowns.*

In summary, those involved in the *Reducing Social Isolation Through Volunteerism*

program strongly endorsed the program as it unfolded over 2020-21. This was confirmed by final comments from volunteers and families.

Volunteers observed:

- *I think 1:1 with the individuals is a great benefit to the individuals! The program is wonderful!*
- *The CLAPW experience was one of the most valuable experiences that I have had and I am grateful for it.*

Families noted the following:

- *We are glad that this program was suggested to us. My son looks forward to his visits with the young lady.*
- *1:1 volunteer matches are very beneficial to the supported person and the family. It also benefits the volunteer to feel needed and helpful.*
- *It is a great program and a very worthwhile experience for our daughter.*
- *We have all really enjoyed the program and our family member looks forward to it each week.*

# About the Reducing Social Isolation Through Volunteerism Program



The *Reducing Social Isolation Through Volunteerism* program recruited volunteers who would engage one-on-one with people supported by Community Living Ajax-Pickering and Whitby (CLAPW). Among them were community college students interested in pursuing a career in developmental services and involved in a placement at CLAPW.

The original intent of the program was to increase the involvement of people supported by CLAPW in local community activities and through that to decrease their physical and social isolation.

However, due to the pandemic, the first year of the program focused instead on providing people supported by CLAPW with virtual activities of their choosing.



## About This Evaluation

The evaluation was conducted by CMCS Consulting Services of Oshawa.

CMCS created surveys which were circulated to those who volunteered in the *Reducing Social Isolation Through Volunteerism* program and to families of CLAPW participants. Because the program was virtual in the first year, the surveys referred to it as 1:1 Volunteer Matches.

These surveys were augmented by a survey created by the funder of the program, the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), and completed by the participants from CLAPW.

The CMCS survey posed the following questions:

- Were the people supported by CLAPW able to engage in meaningful activities of their choosing?
- Did the activities happen as often as the people supported by CLAPW wanted?
- Did CLAPW prepare the volunteers well for helping the person they supported?
- Were the volunteers well matched with the person supported in terms of their interests?



- Did the volunteers receive the support they needed from CLAPW over the course of the Project?
- Is *Reducing Social Isolation Through Volunteerism* a valuable program that provides people supported by CLAPW with a range of activities and helps them lead a life of their choosing?

The CMCS survey also asked for ideas on enhancing the program and invited comments related to each of the questions above.

The OTF survey focused on whether the people from CLAPW who participated in the program:

- Felt less alone
- Felt more connected to their community
- Had someone they could talk to about their problems
- Made more friends
- Talked to more people

Sixteen volunteers responded to the CMCS survey, along with thirteen families. Sixteen people supported by CLAPW completed the OTF survey.

# Evaluation Findings



The results from the surveys were overwhelmingly positive about the program and its benefits to people supported by CLAPW, to the volunteers and to the families.

## OTF Survey Results

As reported in the OTF survey summary, all sixteen people supported who responded, indicated that they reached their most important goal:

- Three said they felt less alone.
- Five felt more connected to their community.
- Two said they had someone they could talk to about their problems.
- Three indicated they had made more friends.
- Three reported they talked to more people.

## CMCS Surveys Results

As noted, the CMCS surveys were completed by the volunteers and the families of the participants from CLAPW.

### Activities of Their Choosing

**The first question posed on the CMCS survey asked whether participants were able to engage in meaningful activities of their choosing. Fourteen of the sixteen volunteers (88%) strongly agreed (12) or agreed (2) that they were able to engage in meaningful activities of their choosing. All thirteen families (100%) strongly agreed (7) or agreed (6).**

The activities the volunteers said they facilitated included the following:

- Watching movies
- Watching sports
- Watching TV shows
- Playing online games including via Zoom (3)
- Looking at anything with a motor, generally cars, ATV's, snowmobiles, jet skis and other motorized vehicles.
- Creating a PowerPoint of building ideas
- Word hunt (2)
- Listening to music (2)
- Reading poetry
- Dancing

Families noted the following activities:

- Watching and discussing movies
- Chatting, games, dancing
- They talked which is what he wanted and needed
- My daughter speaks Spanish so it's awesome for her
- Listening to music
- Chatting about personal interests
- Playing guessing games
- The volunteer is always asking what (name) wants to do.
- (Name) has been in close contact with his volunteer, mostly daily telephone conversations about Hockey etc.

Additional comments from the volunteers about the activities included:

- *My 1:1 begins the meeting with a song that she wants me to listen too. We end the meeting talking about what activities she would like to do next time so I can get them ready.*
- *We both enjoy the same music, love playing cribbage, all sports, although he likes the Leafs and I like the Habs, but we work around it, lol.*
- *The person I supported liked playing word games, she sometimes liked reading a short passage or a poem from books, she liked to show me some of her craft work and at times we listened to music and did a little jig.*

### Frequency of Activities

The second question from the CMCS survey asked whether the participant was able to participate in activities as often as they wanted. Among the volunteers, 15 of 16 (94%) strongly agreed (11) or agreed (4). Twelve of the thirteen families (92%) strongly agreed (3) or agreed (9).

The comments of the volunteers about frequency included:

- *The pandemic has slowed us down a bit with how we communicate, but we still try to talk on the phone about 4 times a week and try to zoom call including games night about 4 times a month.*
- *(Name) could participate in activities as often as he wanted... I do think in the future he will engage more as he gets comfortable with me and also the virtual programs.*

The comments of families about frequency included:

- *My son looks forward to his visits with the volunteer.*
- *However the program was only actually offered one hour each week.*
- *Time spent was on zoom/computer only, limited activities.*
- *(Name) also enjoys the zoom meetings very much. With the lockdown in effect there isn't much to do outside.*

### Other Benefits

Asked whether the person they supported benefited in other ways from being involved in activities of their choosing, fifteen of the sixteen volunteers (94%) strongly agreed (11) or agreed (4). From the family perspective, all thirteen (100%) strongly agreed (6) or agreed (7) that there were other benefits.

The volunteers observed:

- *Allowed for self-reflection which I think they found helpful, recalling good and bad memories and working through them.*
- *(Name) seems to enjoy talking in a 1:1 environment, while I've noticed he doesn't like group environments very much. We enjoy talking about cars and the like for his knowledge of vehicles is vast.*
- *I feel my one on one is more attentive when she picks the music she wants to listen too. If I try picking it, she will go searching for a different song and not pay attention to me.*
- *(Name) just doesn't benefit from me but I benefit from him. we have a lot in common and even after knowing for (name) for almost 30 plus years I still enjoy his company, especially when we do stuff like play cards or just talk.*

- *I think (name) did benefit from our PowerPoint. He had different ideas to share the following week.*
- *She understands spelling and she is able to re-arrange the words as scattered as they look.*
- *Most of the time was spent doing or seeing something he enjoyed. I believe that it gave him an opportunity to see things he liked, even though he could not actively participate in doing the activity. It gave him joy.*
- *The word games were fun and interesting, which challenged the person I supported to think about the correct answers. She looked forward to just talking and sharing with someone about her activities during the week.*
- *I believe that having this one on one gives the person I supported something to do with their time and gives them something to look forward to as well as their being able to pick what we are doing or talking about that day.*

Regarding other benefits, families commented that:

- *The one-on-one interaction is very good for my son.*
- *He loved having someone to talk to besides his parents. They talked music and things our son likes.*
- *Being able to communicate and talk with someone close to her age.*
- *They feel valued and important to be able to choose and have someone interested in helping and spending time with them.*
- *My daughter's attention span is sometimes quite limited and she is easily distracted. In order to keep her*

*engaged, it is important to have a varied program available.*

- *Yes, someone to talk to about her anxiety and stress.*

### **Preparation of Volunteers by CLAPW**

**Asked whether CLAPW prepared them well for helping the person they supported to participate in activities of their choosing, fifteen of the sixteen volunteers (94%) strongly agreed (7) or agreed (8). As for families, all thirteen strongly agreed (7) or agreed (6) that CLAPW prepared the volunteers well.**

Volunteers' observations about preparation included:

- *Supervisor facilitated interaction and meetings in the beginning, always suggesting new ideas for activities*
- *Sharon especially helped me be prepared for all the amazing people i would meet by helping explain everything in clear and concise details.*
- *I started my one on one when I was completing my placement with CLAPW. The first 3 weeks I was with them there was also another volunteer there so I can watch over her and she can show me some of the activities they were doing with the one on one.*
- *Hard to say, like I said I've known (name) much longer than I've been associated with CLAPW. But I must say the events they put on prior to the pandemic have given us the opportunity to do things I normally wouldn't have done.*
- *Yes, I was fully prepared for (name) and also had a staff from the CPP Program support me for the first month or so.*

- CLAPW prepared me well by providing me with the link to meet and I was well informed about the person I want to support.
- CLAPW did prepare me for the person I supported due to the groups that I was involved in, giving me the experience to communicate with the person I supported in a manner that was understanding to them.
- I was provided with some background on the person before starting to support her. I was also provided with enough support to engage with the supported individual.
- CLAPW let me know about this person before I started working with him. They gave me information towards his likes and dislikes as well as what he would normally do before the pandemic so that way I was prepared and knew a little about him.

Families' perspective on CLAPW's preparation of the volunteers included:

- She seems to really understand my son's likes.
- I can see directions and the personal caring from CLAPW.
- (Name of volunteer) is kind and fun and compassionate
- The volunteer was very flexible and able to change the activity quickly when necessary.
- They had discussed before the program started things that she was interested in and built on that.
- There were always 2 or 3 volunteers on the computer. Sometimes my individual would comment that she didn't know what she was supposed to plan for the next week.

## Fit of Matches of Volunteer and Person Supported

Asked whether they felt they were well matched with the person supported in terms of their interests, eleven volunteers (69%) strongly agreed (6) or agreed (5). Two disagreed and one strongly disagreed. Twelve of the thirteen families (92%) strongly agreed (7) or agreed (5) that the volunteer was well-matched to their family member.

Volunteer comments about fit included:

- Not very similar in terms of interests but it hasn't gotten in the way.
- I am a big fan of skidoos and ripping the open lakes of Ontario with speed, while (name) likes snowmobiles and ripping the frozen lakes of Ontario.
- I feel like this is a great match. We are also chatting and she is always so excited to talk to me about her weekend.
- By reconnecting with (name), and yes, all thanks to CLAPW. (Name) has also reconnected with other DuPont retirees through monthly coffees and our retirement luncheon.
- Yes, I believe so. I enjoy talking and listening to others.
- I think our interest was the same. I understood what she wants and I was able to support her.
- I would say we weren't well matched but it did not matter, because things that interest him, I knew about, and did not mind learning new things.
- I was quite comfortable with the person I was matched with and we had similar interests.
- I believe I was matched well based on our interests. I enjoy look at cars and knowing more about them which my



*one on one helped with because he knows a lot about all sorts of cars and other vehicles.*

Families added to the issue of fit:

- *She seems to be a very patient and understanding individual.*
- *My daughter speaks Spanish and the volunteer also, so great!*
- *She is amazing*
- *They both enjoy listening to music*
- *Very well matched.*

### Ongoing Support from CLAPW

**Asked whether throughout their time in the program, the volunteers received the support they needed from CLAPW, fifteen of the sixteen (94%) strongly agreed (11) or agreed (4). Regarding ongoing support to their family member participating in the 1:1 program, all thirteen family members (100%) strongly agreed (7) or agreed (6) that they got what they needed.**

Volunteer comments about ongoing support included:

- *Yes, the supervisor has been great, facilitated transition into new match and was always checking in.*
- *At every turn someone is available to help me with any inquiry I have about the program or the people in the program.*
- *Sharon, the volunteer coordinator, went above and beyond.*
- *Whenever I needed help, the staff or other volunteers would have great advice for me and helped lead me in the direction I needed to go. We are all there to help each other when needed and come together to provide the best support.*

- *Yes, I did receive the support I needed from CLAPW. Sharon Burgess was very helpful and always organized. She responded to any concerns or questions in a timely manner.*
- *Every time I asked questions, I got a prompt response.*
- *I am forever grateful for the experience at CLAPW and the staff and also the persons supported there. The staff helped me with any questions I may have, gave me ideas and also was very available to guide me through my time in the program.*
- *I could speak with my supervisor about any difficulties encountered during my 1:1 match.*
- *I received amazing support from CLAPW. Anytime I sent out an email or had a question my answers got back to me as soon as possible.*

Family comments about ongoing support included:

- *On occasions where the timing had to be adjusted, the rep from CL was very prompt in communicating this.*
- *The Zoom talks have been fantastic*
- *The coordinator of the program was always available to make sure the partnership was working smoothly.*
- *CLAPW has done a great job keeping this group occupied during these lockdowns.*

## Benefits to Volunteers and Families

Asked if they, the volunteers, also benefitted from being involved in the 1:1 program, all sixteen (100%) strongly agreed (12) or agreed (4). All thirteen families (100%) strongly agreed (6) or agreed (7) that there were benefits to the family that accrued from the involvement of their family member in the program.

The comments of the volunteers to this question included:

- *Got to learn about new people, ways to interact and how to remain respectful in terms of talking and being patient!*
- *It helped me become more confident in my skills as an SSW in training.*
- *I have benefited in the way of my confidence. Before i joined I rarely talked to strangers or new people in my life but now I enjoy having even the smallest conversations with people. This placement has made me a better person with my communication skills being heightened.*
- *I benefited from this program because it gave me a different opportunity and ways in supporting individuals through a pandemic. It also helped me by learning that I can still support individuals from their homes/group homes and they are still having fun while getting the supports and services they need.*
- *Not only have I reconnected with (name) but I met a lot of other people there (his friends) and I look forward to participating in the Thursday night game's night.*
- *Yes, I did benefit from being Involved with the program. I felt supported, needed and welcome in all the groups*

*I was involved in and my 1 to 1 match with (name).*

- *I learned new things and am proud to have my placement here.*
- *This is a very sure answer. I went into the program not sure what to expect but came out knowing where I am and where I need to be. The experience showed me a different approach to communication, listening and interacting with others. It gave me an insight on how persons with a disability may feel and view situations from their point of view and also how they are no different from anyone of us.*
- *The 1:1 match taught me several valuable lessons. It helped me learn how to interact with people having intellectual disabilities and also maintain my own professional boundaries.*
- *I believe I truly have benefitted from being in this program, I think in the future for my jobs, I will have an amazing experience in this job field because of CLAPW and all of the things they have taught me during my placement.*

Families referenced a number of benefits, one of which was seeing their family member happy:

- *The interaction made him really happy.*
- *Good time for respite.*
- *When my supported family member is happy it makes the whole family a bit calmer*
- *It was so good to see how my daughter looked forward to the 1:1 program time and she made sure that she always had something special to share with the volunteer each week.*

- *The hour weekly gave me time to support the other resident in the home 1:1.*
- *It's very nice for (name) to have an outlet to talk about her anxiety.*

## **Value of the Reducing Social Isolation Through Volunteerism Program**

**Asked whether Reducing Social Isolation Through Volunteerism is a valuable program that provides people supported with a range of activities and helps them lead a life of their choosing, sixteen volunteer respondents (100%) strongly agreed (11) or agreed (5). All thirteen families (100%) concurred that Reducing Social Isolation Through Volunteerism is a valuable program, with seven strongly agreeing and six agreeing.**

Input from the volunteers about the value of the program included:

- *Definitely think peer support helps facilitate self-reflection and indulging in personal hobbies which helps development.*
- *1:1 is perfect for someone in my program at Durham College, that being the SSW social service worker program, where the end goal is being able to help anyone no matter the case.*
- *I think 1:1 matches should be available/marketed for students. It can be more flexible, virtual, less structured, etc. which young people like.*
- *I think it's good that they can still have choices from home with the activities they want to do or participate in. They can also still have that one-on-one attention just like if they were at the*

*day program. Technology is a great thing that we can use as a tool to still support individuals with their wants and needs.*

- *100% - not only does it help the people that CLAPW supports but also builds new friendships.*
- *Yes, I believe that this program is great for people to engage in activities and connect with others and each other virtually.*
- *It is a challenge that spurs one to a greater height, because you explore new opportunities for learning.*
- *I think 1:1 gives an excellent opportunity for a person to build a rapport that will enable them to become more comfortable communicating to another person whilst building their self-confidence.*
- *I think especially during these pandemic times, the 1:1 match was very valuable for the supported individuals.*
- *I believe that this program is very valuable due to the fact that it gives the one-on-ones an opportunity to do things they are interested in and be able to talk about things they want to talk about.*

Families reinforced the sentiment of the volunteers:

- *This is a welcome addition to my son's week, especially during COVID.*
- *My daughter speaks Spanish so is better and more comfortable for her.*
- *This past year has been so tough on adults with special needs. (Name) has been frustrated and lonely. It is so nice to connect with someone his own age.*
- *My daughter enjoyed the opportunity to discuss similar interests as well as*

*finding out what other interests the volunteer enjoyed.*

- *We are hoping that (name) will be able to stay in contact with the group after we move.*

## Ideas for Improvement

**Asked whether they had ideas for making the Reducing Social Isolation Through Volunteerism program better, five respondents (31%) strongly agreed (3) or agreed (2). Similarly, of the 13 family respondents, five (38%) strongly agreed (2) or agreed (3) that changes could be made.**

Volunteers' comments included:

- *Given the virtual nature of the meetings it's difficult to say but it has been great despite the challenges.*
- *I am still learning of activities I can do and getting advice from other volunteers.*
- *The only ideas I have are the PowerPoints: to help them see some of what is being discussed they could add pictures themselves.*
- *I think that 1:1 matches are great. What I did find was the first meeting is a bit challenging for both persons. It may help if both individuals are given an idea or short list of things that the person they will be interacting with likes. I think that will already make a ground for introduction and open talking more smoothly. From there the groundwork has begun for the building of open communication.*
- *I have no ideas for making this program better at all, I think, given Covid and everything else going on this program is doing amazing and so is the staff.*

- *I believe CLAPW's volunteer program is amazing!*

Families suggested the following:

- *Activities in the community.*
- *I hope it continues whether it be virtual or in person after the restrictions are lifted. It is always a challenge to expand the circle of friends for our daughter and this program is wonderful for creating new friendships and encouraging new interests. I would like to find out whether it would be possible to include some more games which would help improve her general knowledge and vocabulary.*
- *Once the lockdown is over it will be nice to have volunteers be able to come to the home and have a social distance visit.*
- *With regards to my family member, he is only interested in a one-on-one program. It would be nice to have a physical activity like arts, reading with him on 1:1 basis. Right now, he is only on 1:1 talking/listening. We tried him on groups but he acted up like threw himself on the floor.*

A number of families were complimentary of the program as it exists:

- *I think the program serves (name) well as it is. I don't have any suggestions for improvement.*
- *It seems to be working very well.*
- *Thank you for all.*
- *Many thanks to all the staff involved in this program.*

## Final Comments

Final comments from the sixteen volunteers included:

- *I think 1:1 with the individuals is a great benefit to the individuals! The program is wonderful!*
- *I would recommend CLAPW for student placement to every student ever. This placement has helped me become a better person and I'm only about halfway through. I'm excited to continue my experience with CLAPW and I can't wait to see what the future has in store.*
- *I have appreciated being reconnected with (name) not so much as a volunteer but as his friend. (Name) and I have been friends going on 30 years, maybe more and good friends are hard to find, so without a doubt I appreciate everything CLAPW does to bring 1:1 volunteer matches together and to help both sides of the match enjoy life that much better and for this I will be forever grateful.*
- *I really enjoyed the virtual program; it was a great experience.*
- *The staff should keep up the good work.*
- *The CLAPW experience was one of the most valuable experiences that I have had and I am grateful for it.*
- *I enjoyed the 1:1 match with the person I supported. It was a good match and a great experience for me.*

- *I am thankful for this opportunity at CLAPW and I wish I could continue volunteering at CLAPW.*

Families noted the following:

- *We are glad that this program was suggested to us. My son looks forward to his visits with the young lady.*
- *So thankful for this program.*
- *(Name) enjoys interacting /talking with (name of volunteer). She claims they have common interests in tv shows and movies so good discussion sessions for (name).*
- *1:1 volunteer matches are very beneficial to the supported person and the family. It also benefits the volunteer to feel needed and helpful.*
- *It is a great program and a very worthwhile experience for our daughter.*
- *We have all really enjoyed the program and our family member looks forward to it each week. So nice to have 1:1 or 2:1 time for themselves.*
- *This is a great program. It has kept the individual I support happy during this difficult time. These volunteers gave her something to look forward to.*
- *Thanks again!*
- *Great job by everyone involved.*





## Conclusion

The stakeholders have spoken. In their view, the *Reducing Social Isolation Through Volunteerism* program met all its goals.

It provided meaningful activities for participants; the activities were of the participants' choosing; the activities fulfilled the most important goals of each participant; they were as frequent as the participants wanted; and the volunteers and participants were well-supported by CLAPW.

In addition to the very significant benefits for participants, the program produced important benefits for the volunteers, as well as for families.

These conclusions are confirmed by the final comments from volunteers and families.

Volunteers observed:

- *I think 1:1 with the individuals is a great benefit to the individuals! The program is wonderful!*
- *The CLAPW experience was one of the most valuable experiences that I have had and I am grateful for it.*

Families noted the following:

- *We are glad that this program was suggested to us. My son looks forward to his visits with the young lady.*
- *1:1 volunteer matches are very beneficial to the supported person and the family. It also benefits the volunteer to feel needed and helpful.*

- *It is a great program and a very worthwhile experience for our daughter.*
- *We have all really enjoyed the program and our family member looks forward to it each week.*

The very positive views of the stakeholders suggest that credit is due to OTF for providing funding and to CLAPW for conceptualizing the program and for putting the program into operation during the COVID pandemic, adjusting it so that it happened virtually.

As one family member observed: *Great job by everyone involved.*

Finally, note should be made of the compliments directed by volunteers and families towards the work of Sharon Burgess of CLAPW, who was responsible for overseeing the program.

- *Sharon Burgess was very helpful and always organized. She responded to any concerns or questions in a timely manner.*
- *Sharon especially helped me be prepared for all the amazing people I would meet by helping explain everything in clear and concise details.*