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Thoughts on Volunteering 12/12/09

I just finished my second session of monthly volunteering for a program called **Reading to Kids**. It reminded me a lot of my college work study that was a tutoring program for a local elementary school. So much of teaching tends to be behavior management, so it seems. It's hard to inspire creative thinking when there are so many distractions. I almost wish that I could walk the kids on a leash for 20 minutes to tire them out before we get to the reading. It's only for that reason that I think I would be miserable as a teacher. I really hate the fact that so much of my time would be spent containing energy.

Regardless, the program is valuable and undoubtedly helpful to the children. It may not be my particular cup of tea, but I think I'll keep going. Volunteering can only get a program so far, though. It's sad to know that the one thing I don't have much of is the one thing that's needed more than anything. Money speaks volumes.

I met a woman named Toni who was the mother of the program coordinator. I asked her what she did for a living, and she said, "Oh, I'm just a mom!" She told me an incredible story about a teenaged girl that she fosters on the weekend. Apparently, the girl's mother has schizophrenia, and had to dissociate herself from her daughter because she was causing more harm than good whenever they would spend time together. Most of the week, the girl lives in a halfway house. She used to live with a full time foster family, but they weren't monitoring her medication, so she descended into a harmful psychological spiral that resulted in depression and self-mutilation. The halfway house is a better fit for her, but Toni is just glad to have the girl back with them again, even if it is part time. She'll be 18 soon and will be exiting the system at that point. Toni just wants to make sure her foster daughter makes it to graduation.

It's comforting to hear stories like this and to know that there are people with such big hearts in the world.

I started the process of applying to be a mentor for the Los Angeles Youth Network. That's a program that I would actually love to be a part of. If they find me a suitable candidate for mentorship, I will probably not begin with them until next year.

I bet you're wondering what this has to do with my career path in entertainment. I dunno, really. I guess I'm following my bliss until all these things sort of start coming together.