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11TH GRADE

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How I Can Change the Future of Education

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has made me a better student because interaction with children has helped me be more caring and understanding. Knowing that my tutees are expecting me to be there, I enjoy going every day. I stand in the teacher's shoes as far as knowing how the student feels when he or she doesn't want to cooperate, so I try to work with my teachers more closely because of it.

Tutoring has helped me better understand children. When you are a teenager, you forget what it's like to be stuck in the same class all day. Sometimes my tutees don't want to work, so I have to find an effective and positive way to motivate them.

To me, tutoring isn't just a job I have to go to. It is a chance to meet new people and use my knowledge and skills to help them get ahead. I get to spend an hour every day with mentally and physically challenged children helping them better understand their schoolwork. All the children I get to work with have such interesting personalities. I'm very lucky to get to experience that and broaden my knowledge and understanding of the unique people that make up our society.

I remember when one of my students had surgery on his knee because he limped. When he came back to school, he was walking around the classroom telling me to watch him because, in his words, he "didn't walk funny anymore." I learned what being proud of our own achievements meant

when the excitement of each new step presented itself to him. Later during Christmas, the teachers got each student a present. I got more joy out of watching their faces light up as they opened them than I did opening my own present. It's the first time I've truly felt the spirit of Christmas through a child's eyes.

My tutees and I have a special relationship. Sometimes I feel like they are teaching me things about life as I teach them addition and subtraction. I learn what encourages them and how to spark their interest in how younger students do in school. I hope I am doing my part to do away with the stereotype of typical teenagers who hang out and cause problems.

When I was younger, I needed help with my book work, but my teacher was always busy with the "class clown." I would have really appreciated a tutor at that time in my life. Since I became a tutor, I feel like I'm doing something important for kids and making a difference in how they feel about school and learning. I understand now that we can all improve a student's outlook on school by taking time a few minutes a day to help out. I hope to spread the word to my friends and family and also to the students that I tutor that helping our younger generations will make a big difference in the future of our society.

