

“First-Year Writing Seminar: The Podcast,” Season 1

Episode Transcript: Sara Graña on “Contributing to a Larger Community”

[More Peace, More Love, More Light song]

Guest welcome: Good morning everybody! I am here with today’s guest Sara Graña. She is a freshman at Cottey College majoring in biology. Today she is going to tell us more about the importance of contributing to a larger community in her life.

[Anthem piano chord 4]

The community where I grew up had a lot of issues to work in, just like every community. I did not really know about the meaning of volunteering and community service until I was sixteen years old. Since then, I discovered a “superpower” we can have as humans. I believe in the potential of contributing to a larger community. I believe in the giving of oneself for the welfare of others and developing humanity and compassion.

My town had issues with suicide and violence, apparently, we had the highest rate of suicide in Uruguay. Seeing that happen around me changed my perspective of life, and I decided to join projects to make a change regarding this situation we were facing as a community. I remember a lot of people from other regions of the country and the continent say that the environment and people’s attitude was different in my town. Later, I realized that the sense of community union and help that was missing, was needed.

When my eyes were open to this need of service and community union, I realized individualism was more present than community union. People were in their own individual bubble and ego. As we all know, humans do not work by themselves. We need each other. A thought I have tried to keep in mind is we all know how life is, and how somehow life hits us all. We are in the same ship, and it is up to us to help each other or fail by ourselves.

It was in 2018 when some friends and I decided to start a church youth group in the town. Different young people from all backgrounds came together, everyone facing their own challenges. We met every Saturday and those same issues we could all be facing was what brought us together in discussions. I cannot forget when I was able to tutor and listen to two thirteen-year-old girls. Their names were Abril and Vaninna, and at such a young age they had gone through a lot. It was highly probable that the only safe refuge they had was that youth group at church. Nothing compares to the feeling of knowing that these girls have now overcome panic attacks, domestic problems and other obstacles in their lives. But what if they would not have been listened to or supported? This made me get to the conclusion that the role we play in helping someone to have hope is huge.

I also believe that contributing to a larger community does not only help others but ourselves too. When I focused on the issues of my community, it gave me purpose and motivation to see a change. In recognizing each other’s needs and doing good to those around me, I am also helping myself. Service and contribution to others has brought happiness to my life.

I have come to believe that focusing not only on my own growth and wellbeing but also in that of others made me more human and connected to those in my community. By supporting and helping those who are hurt, I give less attention to the negative things happening in my life, and rather, I focus on the positive of life.

Working on the issues in my town opened my mind and deepened my understanding of humanity. Now I can say that contributing to others and helping them have hope is something that cannot be missing in life. I would not be who I am now if I would not have spent time contributing to other people's lives. I know that many of us in the youth group needed to be supported and listened to. Perhaps a shoulder to cry on and to be understood. No matter how small, we can contribute to change in other's lives. [Two piano loop 1] This is why I believe in the power of contributing to others' lives.

Music attribution

Title: More Peace, More Love, More Light

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Anthem – Piano chords 4

From: <https://www.soundtrap.com/> (free use)

Two – piano loop 1

From: <https://www.soundtrap.com/> (free use)