RESPONSIBILITY NARRATIVE

Reading Buddies
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"Could you stay a little longer and read another story to me?" "Are you going to go to recess with us today?" These questions were asked by second graders who wanted to know if their "reading buddies" could stay just five minutes longer to be with them. One day after practice, my football coach mentioned to the team that we were going to read to second graders. None of us knew what to expect. We all looked at each other and did not know whether to be excited, nervous or both. This was a new thing to all of us and is something that I am sure we will all remember.

Starting with going over to the elementary school and receiving training on how to read to the younger kids, we then learned how to help them read to us. We learned how to help the kids out when they were struggling with a word or just talk with them because sometimes that is all they are going to want to do. Our trainer said that talking with them was fine because simply spending time with them is all that really mattered. This was reassuring to all of us.
because none of us knew the correct way to read to a second grader and keep their attention. They trained us and then it was time for us to meet our buddy and get to know them a little better.

When we met our buddies, they gave us a picture they had been drawing and we all felt bad because we did not have anything to give them. So the next time we came, we all brought them something. But, when we finally started to read to them everything seemed to go well. My buddy's name was Cameron. He seemed shy and not very talkative when I first met him. However, as time went on and as we got to know each other and about our hobbies, he became very outgoing. He was not the shy little kid I thought he was going to be when I first met him. His favorite place to be was the playground, and it seemed to me that he loved to be there because he was so energetic. He told me that he liked when I read to him the best because I was a good reader. This was really fun because it made me want to go back and read some more, and to just chat with him, and all of his buddies. Reading with our buddies turned out to be an event that most of the players on the team looked forward to, and could not wait to go to the next week. We were excited, not just because we got to be out of class, but because it was something that made reading fun and something new.
The hardest part about having them read to us was helping them out with a word, without making them feel bad. You felt like you just had to just tell them the word. It was hard to watch them struggle so much on one word. That is where the training came in handy. The training taught us how to help them sound out the word or if they were struggling so bad and they could not sound out the word to just go ahead and tell them the word. The key usually was to have them look at the pictures and then the word popped into their head because the picture was the word they were struggling with. Helping them learn to read was very challenging but it also was one of the most rewarding things our team has ever done. It is good to know that you helped teach someone to read a little better.

When our season was over, so was our time with our reading buddies. As we were leaving, their teacher asked how we would feel about being writing buddies. We all immediately said, "YES"! This was one of the greatest ideas that we had ever heard. We would be able to continue to communicate with our reading buddies but in another form. We would write to them and then they would respond back. Not only would this experience have made reading fun for us but, also to make writing a responsibility worth remembering, just like the reading had done. It was one of the most important responsibilities and is something that we
would never forget.

As we wrote them once a week not only did they look forward to us writing them, but I think that we all looked forward to having them write us and seeing what they had done and what was new to them. Cameron, I think, loved to write, too. I always seemed to get one of the longest letters on the team. This made me feel great because I knew that I had made a connection with him through reading, and now it was going to continue through writing. They always had something exciting to tell us and then we would respond by telling them on how fun that must have been or how scary that must have been. We would all read each other's letters to see what all of them were up to, not just what our buddy had been doing.

At first reading buddies sounded a little scary to all of us and a little bit exciting. When we first started to read to them it was awkward but once we started it was very hard trying to stop reading to them. We all wanted to go back the week after we were done with the program but we couldn't. Not only did they enjoy our reading to them, but we enjoyed reading to them more. When we started to write the letters it was so much fun. We all would write as much as possible because we knew that it would mean the world to them and they would probably treasure them. And the same was true for us, I kept my letters that I had
received from them, and I think today that I still have a couple of my favorite ones from Cameron. I also had to go out and buy a *Curious George* book because it was my reading buddy’s favorite book, and I wanted to have it to remember him by. Through this experience of reading to them I think everyone on the team enjoyed reading a little more. When I read a book I think about my reading buddy, as well as when I write a paper. I also found that by being obligated to our reading buddies, it made all of us do a little better in school because we were used to the idea of reading as part of a larger picture. Not only did reading buddies make reading important, but in the same way it made writing fun and part of this larger picture. This was one of the most memorable high school experiences that I have ever had, and I am sure both Cameron and I will remember this experience for years to come.