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The Lorrie Woycik Story

Lisa Talley
lisa.talley@valpo.edu

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The Lorrie Woycik Story
Lisa Talley lisa.talley@valpo.edu
Professor Powell phillip.powell@valpo.edu
Department of Communications
Oral Presentation

For the 2019 Graduate Symposium, it would be a pleasure to showcase Mrs. Lorrie Woycik's life. My graduate showcase project is a documentary on a local volunteer, Lorrie Woycik. As an alumnus of Valparaiso University, Mrs. Woycik spent her life dedicated to improving the community through her service work with special needs individuals. In late May, I will host a public screening of the documentary at Harre Union. The graduate symposium would be a wonderful place to a share the research document, trailer and receive feedback from peers on final alterations before the public screening.

Synopsis for 2019 Graduate Symposium:

The Lorrie Woycik Story

The goal of my documentary is to explore how one life can affect a community. My experiences as a volunteer and member of Porter County is that change is accomplished by identifying and attempting to alleviate the imbalances of our community. The film will document the major moments in her life, the relationships she built and the ripples she started. Some of her accomplishments include helping build the first special needs school in Porter County called the Vale Day School, then helping build the first public special needs program the SELF school, helped cofound the National and Indiana County Special Olympics and for over fifty years she has volunteered three times a week. This documentary commemorates fifty years of service with the Special Olympics.

The project to date has spanned three departments and dozens of kind interview subjects, including many Professors, students and alumni. In the English department, I decided to focus my attention on volunteer activities and researched these topics. In order to round out my field of study I enrolled in HIST 590, an internship with the Archives and Special Collections. Here I was altered to a need to document Vale Day, a project of alumni Lorrie Woycik. While film-making was not my strength I trusted the University to train me. To produce this documentary, I coordinated dozens of interview subjects and learned advanced Adobe Premiere editing skills. In preparation, I guest lectured at multiple CORE sections, produced an Adobe InDesign DVD case and flyer. For tools, I am using a Nikon 5100 DLSR, PRO speed SD card, a Lacie 1TB hard drive, Rode shotgun microphone and two tripods, a bigger sturdy tripod and a mini tripod that fits in my travel camera bag. I realize the need to carry travel size equipment because often when

I mention Lorrie a spontaneous person will volunteer to speak on camera about her good works. To learn advanced Adobe techniques, I enrolled in a concurrent Documentary Film course, watched Lynda courses and sat with Professors and students to ask for feedback.

This project encapsulates my graduate experience and all the good such a degree can offer. Through this project I have become friends and discovered I already knew multiple Special Olympians. My acquaintances at the YMCA turned out to be siblings of Vale Day students, Special Olympians and that “woman” I saw weekly leading a swim class was Lorrie herself. From recording a large group of freezing fraternity brothers fundraising at the Polar Plunge to respectfully documenting a crying sibling so grateful for Lorrie’s care to her sister I find the process touched me much deeper than I believed any project could. Over the course of this year I have met Lorrie for breakfast, volunteered alongside her and discovered a spark for special needs individuals. These kinds of bonds are only possible through such important but often quietly and humbling running community projects. My Professors and peers have inspired and encourage me to dedicate equal attention to this project as Lorrie does for her students. I feel the vast amount of learning and new skills were only possible through the care and support of the multiple departments that supported me.