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12th grade

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What drives me

The thing that drives me is the profession that I am interested in currently pursuing which is a speech therapist. For the longest time, I never knew what I was going to do after high school, and what I wanted to study in college. I bounced around countless ideas from medical to cosmetology to teaching. Finally, I found a career that has a special place in my heart.

I first considered this occupation when I heard from a lady in my ward of a job opening at a local therapy center called Connections Therapy. I was nervous to apply for this job because first off, I didn't know if I would even get the job, and second off, I didn't know everything that the job entailed, and I was worried that I would hate having to work there. Despite all my worries, I decided to apply and just hope for the best. A few days later, I received a call from the manager there, and they asked me to come in for an interview. Jolyn, the boss, told me they were looking for someone who was willing to work hard and was responsible. I went in for the interview, and was thrilled to get the position. I would work on Fridays, from 7:30 in the morning to around 5 o'clock at night. It was a secretary position where I would run the front desk which includes checking the patients in, getting the mail, filing papers, keeping things clean, and helping the therapists with anything else they need. I grew to love this job. I gained a close

relationship with many of the patients and even closer relationships with the therapists I work with. “The biggest reason I like working here is that there is always a positive environment, schedules are flexible, and you get to do what you love!” said Shannon, an occupational therapist at Connections therapy. I was excited to go to work on Fridays and to meet new people and learn more about the therapy offered. At the clinic we offer speech, occupational, and physical therapy for all ages of people. Through working here, I have been able to observe what the therapists do, and I have even been able to assist them in their appointments.

As time passed as I was working there, I was able to help with more and more things. For example, when I first started working there, I only took care of some cleaning responsibilities and filing papers. I now read and edit the SOAP notes completed by the therapist about their daily appointments with their patients. If there is a mistake, I have to email the therapist and tell them exactly what is wrong with it and tell them to fix it. I have also started faxing patient plan of care forms to their physicians or doctors. This experience has encouraged me to learn more about the field of speech therapy and to learn more about this profession.

Another huge reason that I would like to go into speech therapy, is that a speech therapist can also get licensed to go and work at schools. My junior year, I heard from a friend that you could get into a class where you would go help children at other schools in their classrooms. I immediately took interest in this opportunity and signed up as soon as possible. I helped for two trimesters at Stoddard elementary school in Mrs. Lindsay’s kindergarten class. I absolutely loved this experience and the environment of working with kids and helping them grow and learn. This was similar to what a speech therapist

working at schools would do. I had the chance to aid the children with their reading and writing abilities as well as their grammar.

I also decided to take this class again my senior year and once again loved it. This year I was helping in a third grade class instead of a kindergarten class, so you can imagine how different it was. Although these students were much more accomplished, they still struggled with many of the same problems with pronunciation and grammar. After helping with both age groups, I found that no matter what the age, I enjoyed working with people who needed my help in these areas. This led me to believe that speech therapy was the profession for me.

Another component that added to my interest in this occupation, was that all of my siblings had trouble with their ability to pronounce their R's. All of them had to work with a speech therapist to fix this problem. I admired the therapist's ability to be able to solve this issue quickly and efficiently. The therapist that helped my siblings was named Rebecca Barry. She was the one who told me about the job opening at the place I now work at. Rebecca would go to the school my siblings attended and would work with them for around 30 min to an hour. During this time, she would have them complete a word list and would aid them in creating the correct mouth shape and pronunciation of their R's. This was a difficult task as it took a little over a year to fix my R problem completely. Through this time, Rebecca never got frustrated or angry. She was amazingly patient and did an incredible job of mending this issue. Rebecca earlier said, "You have to remember that the people that you are working with did not choose to have a speech problem, so you need to remember to always be patient and positive with them." The relationship that Rebecca was able to build with my siblings was a strong

one. My siblings will forever look up to her and will always respect her, as will the rest of my family. I have loved getting a closer look at what it takes to be a speech therapist, what they do, and the things that they have to deal with on a daily basis.

In all, I know this is the job for me, and is what drives me. I find joy in this work field because of the experiences that I have had and from the friendships that I have made over the last two years. I cannot wait to further my education in this path and gain significantly more knowledge as I grow.

Works Cited

Wall, Jolyn. Personal interview. 2 November 2021.

Jones, Shannon. Personal interview. 16 February 2022.

Barry, Rebecca. Personal interview. 23 June 2022.