

Pillars Volunteer Spotlight

Amyah Brooks

Dinner Service & Group Leader



Q: Tell me a little about your background?

“I will be a senior at Appleton West High School this year. I have lived in Appleton my whole life. Growing up I lived with my older brother Ellis, my dog Rosie and my mom, and we would always (and still do) visit my Grandma often who also lives in Appleton.”

Q: What were you doing before you became a volunteer?

“Before I became a volunteer at Pillars, I was a consistent volunteer at The Boys and Girls Club of the Fox Valley as a mentor and the Appleton Area School District. I would typically spend my days after school at Appleton West or downtown Appleton. I am involved in a handful of clubs and have been President of Appleton West’s Key Club since my Sophomore year. I also work as a hostess at Antojitos Mexicanos in downtown Appleton. Before going into my Sophomore year, I volunteered at Pillars with my Grandma and her church to learn the operations of serving at Pillars so I could lead my group.”

Q: Why did you start volunteering? What motivates you to continue volunteering?



“I fell in love volunteering when I was 12 years old; I had the opportunity to help out a former 6th grade teacher the summer after I graduated from elementary school. Volunteering to me, inspires me. Volunteerism has become a passion of mine; knowing that I am making a difference in others’ lives while collaborating with people all over my community and beyond. There is a great feeling and a sense of joy when coming together with people to achieve a common goal. I am motivated to continue volunteering because I love seeing others happy and smiling. I feel grateful to volunteer, recognizing all the people who have helped me during my life, and I am driven to give back to my community in order to pay other good deeds forward, and this is my way of thanking others for their dedication.”

Q: What does your typical volunteer shift look like?

“My typical volunteer shift consists of delegating tasks to my fellow club members. I, personally, enjoy making the residents lunches before dinner is served. My group likes to make lunch in an

assembly line, with someone preparing the slices of bread in a row, I add the filling, pass it to someone to put it in a Ziploc bag while someone else is putting all of the assortments into a brown paper bag. My group and I pay close attention to detail with cleaning before residents come down too; we wipe down everything with disinfectant spray and we all enjoy deciding who will be serving what. Most people in my group do not like being “banished” to the dishwashing job, and most everyone always wants to serve the most popular dish. My group enjoys having conversations in between serving each guest to get to know each other better within our group.”

Q: How has volunteering impacted you?

“Volunteering has helped me form lifelong friendships with my peers, and lifelong relationships with adults that I’ve had the pleasure to work with during my 7 years of volunteering. As I have gotten older, I came to the realization that I have a passion for volunteering which is why I plan to pursue a career in Education, Law, or Community and Nonprofit Leadership, to create meaningful change in the Fox Valley and beyond. Most of my volunteering besides Pillars has been working with young children at The Boys and Girls Club of the Fox Valley, Jefferson PTA meetings, Highlands after school program, YMCA of Downtown Appleton, Montessori Summer School, and Harbor House. When volunteering with these young children I learned quickly what I said and did mattered. These young children would look up to me, and I wanted to ensure I would be a positive role model and someone they could trust in their life. After witnessing the impact teachers’ and afterschool program staff have on these children and on me, I was confident that I wanted to be an educator.”

Q: What is the best thing that has happened to you, or that you have seen while volunteering?

“The best thing that has happened to me while volunteering has been being a mentor at the Boys and Girls club. I was able to form a one-on-one, long term relationship with a young girl from the middle of my Freshman year through the beginning of my Junior year. Being a mentor inspired me to implement Appleton West's first Mental Health Fair. This young girl knew she could confide in me with school or home thoughts. Having that responsibility to change someone’s life in a positive way has been my goal through volunteering. Sometimes, when having these interactions, you are not able to see the results right away, but you always know you have “planted the seed”. While being a mentor at the Boys and Girls Club I was pleased to see progress in my mentee each week by her being more involved with school and having the confidence to be sociable and lead her own peers. One of the things we discussed was mindset - On how sometimes people in general get into the mindset that “we can’t” or “we are just not good enough.” At the very beginning of my mentoring, my mentee convinced herself she wasn’t good at school, and I wanted to change that. I began incorporating reading and math facts into the activities we enjoyed doing together. For example, counting how many times she scored in a game of air hockey or reading ingredients needed to back cupcakes or complete a science experiment.”

Q: Is there one thing the world should know about you?

“One thing that the world should know about me is that I believe everyone can make a difference. Even the smallest things like saying “hello” or smiling to someone can change someone’s life. It is the little things that add up to big results. One way that I contribute outside of volunteering is my daily purchase of a Java Chip Frappe from Copper Rock multiple times a week; this tiny purchase adds up to a lot of emptiness in my wallet. Anything chocolate is my guilty pleasure!”

Q: For individuals interested in serving in your position at Pillars, what is one thing they should know?

“One thing to know about serving dinner at Pillars is you are always on the move. There is always something for you to do, whether it be cleaning up the area, preparing food or washing and drying dishes. Dinner Service takes a team effort. I am very grateful for my peers and club advisors through the years; they helped guide myself and our club to handle this position efficiently and effectively.”

THANK YOU, AMYAH!



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