Michelle DeFranco
"If I Had a Hammer"
Service Learning - Journal Entry #3

Today was my first "If I Had a Hammer" session. I assumed that the building of the house would be easy, fast, and that most of the children that came to do the project would do most of the work on the house. Boy, was I wrong about all three. First of all, the whole building of the house takes about two hours. Plus each kid has to have at least one turn in using the power drill to drill in the screw. Keeping the kids under control is not as easy as I thought it would be. Many of them tried to go ahead and drill nails in by themselves because they figure they know how to do it already. Then you have kids arguing over who gets to use the power drill first. This job requires more patience than I expected. But the end result is all worth it seeing the kids faces light up over the house they built. Plus I think its pretty cool that once the house is done the kids are allowed to go inside.

This group of kids were pretty good. A few Mr. Know-it-all's but overall a very friendly and hardworking group of kids. I thought once done building the house the kids helped take it down. No, I was wrong again. The volunteers take down the house once the kids are gone. I thought this would take forever but it only took about 30 minutes to do due to the fact there was a bunch of adults doing the job. Yet, it was a tough job lot of the pieces to the house were heavy and large for me to carry but I got through it. I think every time I do a session I will consider it my workout for the day. I must say the volunteers with me that session, including one fellow scholar, worked extremely well together and were very kind and patient with us newcomers. I am very excited about my next session which is coming up very soon, and this time I will have

more experience.

Journal #5

November 30, 2002

This is the last “If I Had A Hammer” session that is counting towards this semester’s service learning. Today I had an older group of kids building the house. I was thinking that I would be able to relax a little bit, because I had faith that these older kids would have some idea of what to do and how to do it. I should learn never to assume things, because I am never right. The kids were just as lost as I was on my first day. But they did a very good job and really worked well in their individual teams. They were patient and very cooperative with one another. This made the day go by with ease and lots of excitement. These kids talked to me a lot more than any other group of kids I worked with. I guess I could say I felt special because they were asking me questions about school, such as, “How is college?”, and “How you get involved in volunteering?” They would sit and listen to all that I had to say. I felt as though they were actually interested in me, and that were not just being nice.

We took a lot longer this time to take down the house, because we did not have very many volunteers. For some reason, I was extremely tired today, so taking the house down just seemed to be a major pain. I had no energy left, and taking down the sidings was difficult especially, because I had to do it by myself. But I made it through and with a smile. All of the volunteers kept asking if I was all right. I felt overwhelmed with care and concern.

These people who are my fellow coworkers, actually my fellow team members really care about me and about each other. I have made a lot of great friendships with my

crew from ”If I Had A Hammer.” In addition, I have been able to meet a bunch of great kids and incredible students. I have two sessions in December that are for next semester’s service learning, and I can’t wait.