

February 3

Today I had my interview to become a mentor/volunteer for America Reads. I had heard of America Reads around campus and it was something I really wanted to be a part of. I've always volunteered with kids and love being able to be a mentor in their lives. I think it's so important for kids to be able to learn from high school/college-aged kids because it's so much more relatable for them. I immediately signed up for an interview slot and interviewed with a mentor in Adele H. Stamp Student Union. She asked me questions about why I wanted to be a volunteer for them and then asked me hypothetical questions about possible problems that could arise and how I would handle them. A few hours after the interview concluded I got an interview from America Reads saying I had been given a volunteer position for their team and training would start next week. I got extremely excited and started putting all of the dates into my calendar.

February 25

Today was our first official day at the school. We have four 30-minute time periods while we're there. The first 30-minute block is used for planning, so planning our lesson for the day and filling out anything we might not have filled out last time we were there. For the other three blocks, we meet with one kid during each block. Today I met two of my three mentees for the first time — Skylar and Nixon, both first graders. I did the America Reads pre-tests with them including getting to know them, going over the alphabet, dictation, two-word tests, and a writing test. This helps the mentors know what the mentees reading level is and what we should work on with each kid specifically. For example, with Skylar, she seemed to be good at recognizing words but struggled with the writing section. I didn't finish all of the tests so they will get finished when I see them on Thursday. I will also meet my third mentee, Emerson on Thursday.

February 27th

Today I got to work with all three mentees. I finished up the pre-tests with Skylar and Nixon and then we talked and got to know each other for the remainder of the time. With Emerson, we started the pre-tests and also spent a little bit of time getting to know each other as well. I learned that with all three mentees they've been through a lot more than the average child I know has been through. It was hard listening to some of the personal things they told me because I can't imagine going through those things at such a young age. I'm excited to be able to be a mentor to these three kids and I hope I can build their confidence as well as help them through any issues that they are struggling with. I hope to be more than someone who is simply teaching them how to read, but instead someone who can almost be considered a friend.