



10-10-2014

Fearless Friday: Emma Murphy

Christina L. Bassler
Gettysburg College

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Bassler, Christina L., "Fearless Friday: Emma Murphy" (2014). *SURGE*. 178.
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Fearless Friday: Emma Murphy

Abstract

Emma Murphy is truly fearless for her persistence and strength in working to change attitudes and stereotypes towards people with learning disabilities both on campus and in the wider community. This semester, Emma started a new club on campus called Great ADDitudes, which aims to raise awareness about ADD/ADHD and provide support for students who feel alone due to their own learning challenges. At 11, she was diagnosed and has wanted to start a club for students with learning disabilities ever since. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, learning disabilities, ADD/ADHD, Great ADDitudes

Disciplines

Disability and Equity in Education

Comments

Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](#) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at surgegettysburg.wordpress.com Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that –isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

FEARLESS FRIDAY: EMMA MURPHY

October 10, 2014



Emma Murphy is truly fearless for her persistence and strength in working to change attitudes and stereotypes towards people with learning disabilities both on campus and in the wider community. This semester, Emma started a new club on campus called Great ADDitudes, which aims to raise awareness about ADD/ADHD and provide support for students who feel alone due to their own learning challenges. At 11, she was diagnosed and has wanted to start a club for students with learning disabilities ever since.

This past summer, Emma was released from a fellowship because of difficulties due to her learning disability. This experience served as a major source of inspiration for her decision to start Great ADDitudes. When her professor reached out to her to learn what

had happened with her fellowship, she confided in him about her learning disability. He was surprised to learn this and told her that had he known, he would have worked with her and made accommodations. Her professor put her in contact with people who could help her get the club started. Realizing what an impact one professor's understanding had on her, Emma wondered what a productive group could do for other students facing similar challenges and the entire student body. Throughout the summer, she worked closely with Academic Advising, Student Activities Board, and the Dean of College Life to get the club started.

Emma explained that being honest about her learning disability and how it impacts her daily life has been one of her greatest struggles. She hopes that by changing campus culture, she can help other students feel more connected and less alone. Ideally, she would like to establish a network of support where students can share their difficulties and learn from one another. She hopes that other students will keep it going so that it will continue after she graduates. "I hope I can impact as many students as I can," says Emma.

Great ADDitudes had its first general meeting and Emma is looking forward to “more student activity.” She has spoken with faculty as well as Gettysburg College President Janet Morgan Riggs about her goals for the club. Although Great ADDitudes is in its early phase, she has a clear vision for the future; she hopes to have talks and invite speakers and psychologists. Her ultimate goal is to create a comfortable environment for students with learning disabilities. She believes that there is a lack of understanding among many people about ADD and ADHD, which results in stigma that causes many to feel ashamed to be open about their challenges. Emma also notes that “there is fear of being asked to sell your prescription,” as Adderall is one of the most highly abused drugs on college campuses.

Something she wants to emphasize is that the club is not just for those with ADHD or other disorders, but also for those who want to support friends or become educated. Learn more about Great ADDitudes and their commitment to inclusiveness and understanding by stopping by their meetings on Wednesdays at 7:00 PM in Breidenbaugh 303!