Alexis Franz

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Humanities 1010

Civic Engagement Final

This semester, we were asked to do a civic engagement activity, and I chose to chaperone a dance for disabled adults. My oldest sister has down syndrome, she’s a peach. Not to mention I also have a little brother, who also has downs. His name is Boris and he is adopted from Russia. He’s a tough little brut that one. Anyways, I have always wanted to take my sister to one of her Trudeau Tigers dances. The Trudeau Tigers is a group of all disabled adults, who get together and have dances a few times a year. They also participate in Special Olympics, my sister does bowling in the winter and shot-put during the summer. My sister informed me that she needed a chaperone to go to the big Halloween dance they have every year. I was beyond thrilled. The entire night was filled with adventures. Now here is the turning point, I am relating this experience to the MissRepresentation module that I learned about while participating in this humanities class.

How am I relating a chaperoning my sisters’ dance, to feminism? Well to be honest, I had no idea that they were relatable to each other until I learned a little more about feminism in this course. I chaperoned this dance on Friday October 20, 2017. I was dressed as a Storm Trooper from Star Wars, my sister was a ghostbuster, and one of my best friends decided to tag along with us, she was a ninja. I’ve put some pictures of our costumes and pictures of the dance at the end of this paper. Anyways, the dance started out great, everyone was having a god time, dancing and enjoying themselves. Some of my sisters’ friends at the dance I had met this summer at her Special Olympic events, so I knew some of them, but there were so many people that I didn’t know. We are all dancing, having a good time, and then one by one, my best friend and I get guys hitting on us and harassing us to the point where we felt obligated to go outside for a little bit.

I guess most chaperones for these events don’t actually participate in the dressing up or the dancing. My friend and I did both, which seemed to attract a lot of attention to us. One of the first guys to come up to us was someone I have never met, and he was probably in his early 50’s. He kept telling us how beautiful we were and how he wanted me to be his girlfriend and his valentine. Now, at first, I kind of just laughed it off and told him thank you, I was flattered, but I was there to enjoy myself and dance with my sister. The guy was relentless, he followed me around everywhere I went and kept repeating to me how much he liked me and wanted to kiss me and dance with me. My best friend and I left to go sit outside just to get away from him, because he would not leave us alone, even when I started talking to other people or was dancing around all over the place. So we go outside for 10-15 minutes, and upon our return, the guy was standing by the door, waiting for us to come back. I politely told him that he should enjoy the dance with his friends and he said he didn’t want to spend time with anyone but me at the dance.

These types of situations can be very awkward. The guy was clearly disabled, and I really was flattered by the compliments. I knew going into this assignment that this was going to be what I used, but at first, I was going to suggest equal rights for people with disabilities. After learning about feminism, I don’t think I have ever been put in a more awkward and sexualized situation before. On top of that guy not leaving us alone, I had several guys comment on my butt, which again, I appreciate, but why? Why does someone feel the need to continually tell me things when I am clearly in an uncomfortable position. I have never felt so sexualized in my life, and I am a good looking girl. I just did not expect something like this to happen at a dance for disabled adults. Feminism is a huge issue, and I se that now, after learning more about it and undergoing this experience.