

REAL impacts from volunteering

"What is REAL?" the Velveteen Rabbit asked the Skin Horse one day. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"

"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

"Does it hurt?" asked the Velveteen Rabbit .

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt."

"It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in your joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand. But once you are Real you can't become unreal again. It lasts for always."

— **Margery Williams Bianco, The Velveteen Rabbit** copyright 1922, George H Doran Company, Publisher

I often share that passage above as a reading to staff as the session comes to a close. It resonates with me from the standpoint that all the energy and passion and late nights and laughs they had over the past week have REALLY impacted their campers and contributed to REAL growth in them.

The impact of volunteering lasts for always. Thank you, volunteers!