

Andrew Ney

St. Columban School

I would like to think of myself as a person who makes people smile because I am funny. I enjoy being this way because making people smile makes me feel good. Looking back on my resume of all my service actions and accomplishments, the best feeling I get when I am helping others, is making them smile.

A few years ago my neighborhood friends and I decided to start a lemonade stand to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina. We gathered some supplies and set up a table with chairs on our street corner. Back then we looked cute, a bunch of 8 year olds trying to raise money for Hurricane Katrina. Because of this we made almost \$125 dollars in one day. This experience heightened my sense of service at a young age. This was the first time I did something that impacted somebody else's life, in a big way. It made me feel very good about myself.

My brother, at times, can be very a stressed and uptight person. He worries about school, sports, and things he can't even control. As his older brother I feel like I should help lighten his load. So, when he is feeling stressed I try to make him laugh and smile. When I succeed I see a big grin on his face and he starts laughing. This experience, hopefully, helps him to be less worried. It also makes me feel good about what I just did.

Meals on Wheels is an organization that delivers meals to the home bound. This is a service that my father does on almost every Monday. When I am off school in the summer I occasionally join him. This experience is always a joy to take part in because I love the look on their faces when they open the door. The elderly always smile and I smile back. I hand them their food and they are gracious.

When doing Meals on Wheels, there is one person in particular who switches up the smiles. His name is Daniel Hall. Mr. Hall is a stop on our Meals on Wheels route. When we pull into his driveway we always wait for him to come

Andrew Ney

St. Columban School

out and greet us. He is partially blind and came from Africa. He comes up to our car and before he takes our food he starts talking. Mr. Hall says an African poem about never giving up. This is what we do every time, and every time the poem makes me smile and feel delighted. Sometimes when I feel like giving up, I think of this man and the poem. It gets me through any situation, in which I want to give up.

In the 7<sup>th</sup> grade we had to choose which foundation we wanted to volunteer at. For this field trip, I chose to volunteer at Star Fire. I chose to go there for one sole and selfish reason, that was where my friends were going. Now Star Fire is an organization that helped the mentally ill. I knew this at the time but I was so caught up in talking to my friends, I never really thought about what they did. At the time, I was somewhat shy towards the mentally ill and when I first got there, these feelings did not change. As the day went on, I got more and more comfortable, so comfortable that I started a conversation with one of them. At the end of fun filled day, I realize that these people are just like us. They liked the Bengals, Reds and American Idol. This experience made me laugh and cherish the time I spent with them. I wasn't smiling because of the service I did, I was smiling because these were genuine funny people.

Many people in my life have contributed to the person I am today. I have learned to be gracious for what I have. When I do service, I do not expect anything in return. But, in fact, I believe that you get two things, in fact. You get a good feeling in your heart and a smile.