

Grace Watson - St. Gabriel Consolidated School - Cincinnati Christian Schools

"No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another"

- Charles Dickens

When I hear this quote, it makes me feel that everyone has a purpose of being here. Every single person on this Earth is here for a reason and we all need to try and use the special gifts we have to help others. The feeling you get when you help someone is almost unexplainable. When you help the people around you, you really are helping yourself. In your heart and mind, you know you did the right thing. You should always help someone, whether you know the person or not. Just a simple smile, or hello can make a difference. You never know what kind of situation the person may be in, so when you help them you could be changing their day.

Even though I am only in the eighth grade, I will not let that hold me back from helping others. One important service project that I am involved in is knitting for babies who are in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). At the end of last year, one of the teachers at my school, Mrs. Helmick, came into the classroom to talk to us about one of her ideas to help others. She was explaining to us that she loves to knit and would love to pass her passion down to us. She said that all the baby hats we would knit, would go to a local hospital for the babies who need them. After she was finished talking, I signed my name on the sheet to participate. Many people signed up, but not many stuck with the project. During that summer we met up once a week for two hours. During those meetings, Mrs. Helmick taught us the basics of how to knit. In the beginning I got very frustrated because I was not picking up the concept as fast as the others, but I was not going to give up. With the help of my grandma, friends, and Mrs. Helmick I caught on. When I finished my first hat, I was ecstatic. I was so happy that this hat was going to help a baby and its family. Just one little hat can mean so much to someone. I was happy to use a new found gift I had developed to help someone else.

Many of the charity works I do are either through school or my church. The busiest time of the year is usually the holidays. Thanksgiving is a special day to spend with your family and friends, but many people are not as fortunate as others and cannot afford the many foods you have on Thanksgiving Day. My family and I wanted to help those few people who were less fortunate. Like many churches, our church had a Thanksgiving food drive. Each family can grab a big cardboard box and fill it with the holiday foods. My whole family went to Kroger and bought stuffing, cranberry sauce, corn, green beans, rolls, a turkey, and much more. Remember when I said when you help someone you get that unexplainable feeling? Well that is the exact feeling I had that day. I cannot explain how good it felt to contribute in the food drive.

The next holiday that is important is Christmas. Christmas is my favorite holiday, but some people are not as lucky as I am on Christmas morning. At St. Gabriel, each junior high classroom is assigned a family, then your homeroom teacher will split you into groups and give each group one family member. That group is responsible for getting that child a Christmas present. It breaks my heart to hear the situations these families may be in. I cannot imagine not being able to have a real Christmas. I have been very lucky to be a part of this project. It makes me feel good knowing that I am part of making someone's holiday just a little bit better.

I look up to many people in my life, but someone I really look up to is my brother Jonah. He is my oldest brother, and is in the United States Marine Corps. Every day he is helping others by being brave and fighting for our country. I always want to give back to our military. In school, I have been able to accomplish that. In sixth grade we made Veterans cards for Christmas. I am sure that they were happy to know that someone, besides their family, is grateful for what they do. Another thing we have done in the past, and are doing right now, is pack lunches and donate socks and shirts to the VA Hospital. Grades K-5 are donating plain white socks and white t-shirts, while grades 6-8 are donating money to buy sandwiches and brown paper bags to pack the lunches in. This whole thing is a big group effort towards helping veterans. From the stories I have heard from my brother, I know that they go through a lot and the little reminders of home they get from us will surely add up.

All these experiences have made me realize how fortunate I am. Knowing that many people do not have enough money to support their families, makes me want to help them more. As I am growing older, I am able to do more things for others. Without the help of my dad, siblings, teachers, and friends I would not be the person I am today. I hope that the things I do for these other people is making a difference. Just remember that the next time you see someone having a rough day, just give them a smile. You never know, a simple act of kindness like a smile can brighten someone's day.