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Sometimes the best gift in life isn't the kind you get from people for your birthday; it's the kind you give to those who really need your help. When you give something to someone in need, their gratefulness and gratitude gives you a feeling inside like no other. Giving to people around you, out of the goodness of your heart is what counts and you shouldn't expect anything in return. If we give to those around us, others will notice our actions and either will be touched by it or take our example and do the same.

In 4th grade, I started to become aware of cancer and how it affects children all over the world. What made me aware was that my grandpa had died of cancer a year earlier. I found out that there are a lot of kids dying from cancer all over the world. So for my 10th birthday, I decided to invite all the girls from my grade and instead of asking for presents, asked for money. With that money, and my own, I bought toys for children in the hospital who had cancer. I figured because of all the costs of chemo and treatment some kids might not get a lot of toys for their birthday. I had so many toys already; I didn't think I needed anymore. After all, I thought those kids needed toys of their own. When I dropped those toys off at the hospital, it gave me a great feeling inside to know that I did something good for all those children. I even got a letter of thanks from the Cincinnati Children's Hospital. After that day, I knew I wanted to continue helping others.

About three years later, in 2012, a family moved onto my street. They had two kids, ages 5 and 7. I never really knew them well, but when the mom and 5 year old daughter got into a car accident, I knew I wanted to do something to help. The girl,

whose name was Grace, was severely injured in the car accident. She suffered from brain damage, however her mom was fine. Grace was in the hospital from August until November. It was near my 13th birthday party that I decided to help Grace. I invited my whole grade and I asked for nothing, except donations for Grace. Grace's grandma, dad, and brother also came. Grace's grandma told me I was a wonderful girl. With all the money I raised for Grace, I felt really proud. I was so happy that I could donate all that money to Grace's family. My mom and I went to a Fifth-Third Bank to cash in the money into a check. The woman that was helping us told me that there were few people like me that she had ever met. The words of that woman and Grace's grandma will stick with me forever. Sadly, Grace passed away in December 2012. I never did get a chance to meet her, but I'm sure she is in a better place now.

Last year in September, I worked at the Mary Rose Mission near my school. It is a soup kitchen for those in need of a meal in Florence, Kentucky. I became aware of all the homeless people and those in need of food in my area, after working there. I passed out the food to each individual or family who walked in. I found it sad to see how many senior citizens there were in need of a meal. One man thanked me for working at the soup kitchen, because he was glad to see someone young. Another woman told me that I was always smiling, so that made her want to smile too. Working at the Mary Rose Mission was an eye opener for me. I had no idea we would have served over 60 people. I am definitely going there again.

I always try to help others when I can. Whether it's giving up my birthday party or helping my sister with homework, doing good deeds is important in everyday life. Even smiling at someone can help brighten someone's day.