

Savoy Lackey - Seven Hills Middle School - Seven Hills High School

"Being a Light in the City"

From a young age, I had always been interested in Superman. I've always wanted to have the power to do what he does. He could fly and had heat vision. Naturally, I looked up to superman because in my 6 year old mind, the idea of flying sounded pretty impressive. But, I think that the main reason that I was drawn to Superman, and super heroes in general, was that they helped people in need. I soon learned that I had the capability to do what any hero could, which was helping others. That's when I realized that I can help others in a completely different way. I could achieve what I had desired to do by volunteering. In first grade at my old school, CHCA, I was taught to be a light in my city. Now, I'm an eighth grader at a completely new school, and I still follow that motto.

I think first grade was a big year for me. Not only was it my first year of experience at a totally new school, but because I realized what giving back was really about. I had the start of my peak of great realization at the blink of an eye. Or poster as some may say. Who would have thought that I would have learned about being a blessing in someone else's life by being bored of boredom in an after-school care room. I was looking at the clock, just waiting for my mom to pick me up after a long, tired day of school when a poster in the nearby distance caught my eye. How could I miss it? It was bright yellow and had a photo of a girl with the biggest smile that I had ever seen right across her face. I wanted to investigate as if my boredom was filled with a game of spy. As I got closer, I began to make out the letters, which soon formed into a word, which soon formed into a sentence. It said " Alex's Lemonade Stand" which was written in bold. An idea had sparked in my head.

By the time that my mom came to sign me out from after- school care, I was completely fixated on the poster. I couldn't stop talking and asking questions about it until I got home. That night, we researched and learned that Alexandra was a young girl who had sadly passed from a form of cancer called Neuroblastoma. While she was living, she raised money for cancer. I found that kids and adults from all around the world had their own lemonade stand inspired by Alex's courageousness and persistence. And then an idea had popped into my head. I was going to have a lemonade stand and cure cancer. Of course, I couldn't cure cancer, as a 6 year old, I didn't think it all through. But what I was certain of, is that the lemonade stand part was do-able. I was surprised at the amount of money I made in my first year doing it. Over the course of four years, I made \$4,200 from the lemonade stand.

All of it was given towards helping to find a cure for childhood cancer. I set up the lemonade stand so that all of it was by donation. It was the pure generosity of everyone's heart that made the stand possible as well as successful. You could give any amount that you wanted to, every dime, penny, nickel, and dollar counted. We had lemonade as well as sweets. Some people just donated money without getting anything in return.

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One year, I raised \$1500. I don't think that anyone got lemonade without making a contribution to the money that we were raising, no matter big nor small.

Giving has been in my blood ever since. A moment that I will never forget was when I had just received a few dollars from my friends dad. I of course was going to spend that money on something I didn't need like candy or gum. That was until I saw a homeless man on the side of the road whose situation was different from all the homeless people that I had seen before him. This man was a lot older, as well as in a wheelchair. I realized that no one was stopping to give him money. In that moment, I had made the decision to give him my money that I would have spent on myself. When I gave my mother the money to give to him, the look on her face showed that she was surprised. I will never forget the joyous look on his face when the money was handed to him. He told us to have a blessed day and he wheeled himself back onto the sidewalk. I could not describe the happiness I felt afterwards. I knew that I had done a good thing and that meant that I was blessed.

From there on, I started Hi-Cincinnati. My mom had explained to me that sometimes, homeless people don't use the money as what it is intended for. This has been conflicting because others may view those they see on the street as greedy or selfish. It gives the homeless community a bad reputation. I wished that I had enough money for every homeless person I passed by who stood on the side of the road with a big cardboard sign that read that anything would help. So I decided for my service project in fourth grade, to create Hi-Cincinnati (Hope In Cincinnati). It will help a homeless person receive a meal. Instead of giving them just a one-dollar bill, I collected money from family and friends and purchased \$5.00 McDonalds gift cards. When we saw homeless people I gave them a McDonalds gift card instead of giving them cash. This way, they were encouraged to get a warm meal rather than something harmful.

I've done a vast amount of projects since then in order to help out and involve my community. At my school, Seven Hills, we volunteer at Matthew 25 every Martin Luther King Jr. day. We call it a day "on" in comparison to a day "of". Meaning that instead of just acknowledging his birthday and what he did, we participate in service to honor both him and the community. I am in a group called Delta Academy. With that, I have volunteered not just at Matthew 25, but the Bethany House which is a women's home. Every year since 4th grade, I have participated in Go Cincinnati. I got involved with it through my church, Crossroads. Go Cincinnati is when each year, an army of volunteers impacts the Cincinnati area through service projects in a one-day blitz of compassion. I have had a chance to be apart of the life-changing group. My first year, I picked up debris around the park, clearing it of trash and many other various harmful objects. After that, I painted around school, helping to restore it to its best condition.

I was also greatly affected by the Aubrey Rose Foundation, for I had an amazing chance, over the course of 3 years, to join in the fun of the American Girl Fashion Show.

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It was such a fun experience knowing that I was given such an honor to part-take in a wonderful opportunity. I'm also a harp student, and I sometimes perform at a senior center. It's amazing to know that your able to honor your elders through the many ways of entertainment.

Some morals that I like to keep in mind are to lead, learn and serve. I can lead by motivating others to start helping out in the community. My goal is to make someone else's life better. By doing this, I can better myself as well as please God. I can learn by finding new ways to get involved. Not only can the impact change the community, but also the world. I can serve by doing what I was put on this earth to do, and that is to help out others. Whether that means to create your own service project or helping your neighbor mow their lawn, anything can help. I want to be the person to say , "How can I make someones' day today?" I want to lead by example and get others to be an influence. We all have the potential to make a lot of problems in the world disappear. Then, I know, that I am doing the right thing, which is what I have been taught since day one. By being lights in the city, we can become stars in the sky.