



2018 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Art, Essay, & Multimedia Contest

Making the World a Better Place

Even though I've been on this earth just a short time, thirteen years to be exact, I feel I have made an impact already in many people's lives. I believe it is due to how my parents raised me. They have taught me from little on up how to respect your elders, how to treat others like you would want to be treated, and always do random acts of kindness. From my grandparents, my parents, and adults whom I know, I have learned to live each and every day to the fullest and make a positive difference in everyone you meet. My mother always says put a smile on your face, as it may put a smile on someone's face.

Every day, many people are in and out of my life. At school I come into contact with many individuals in a day, from teachers, principal, secretary, teammates, coaches, and students. At home, I'm in contact with my parents, siblings, neighbors, members of our church, and others. Even if my day isn't going the best, I still greet everyone with, "Hello! Have great day!" Of course, I'm wearing a smile! At school, almost on a daily basis, there is bullying in some form. Words are sometimes worse than actions. I stick up for those who are bullied. I inform the teachers and support the victims. People, who aren't part of the popular crowd, need to have a friend and I try to be there for them. In sports, everyone says being part of a team has many positive aspects, but I've also found if one sits on the bench and doesn't play much, it can be hard on one's self esteem. This happened to me, but I turned it into supporting all my teammates who were playing. Being upbeat and positive for them, I believe, kept the team spirit up. What I've realized is no one wants to be around someone who is negative. Always put your best foot forward in all you do and with people you meet! I want to be remembered in later years as the girl at school who was always nice!

Giving back has been ingrained in me since I was little. Whether it's helping an elderly neighbor with his chores or sending a note of thanks to someone who gave me something, it all shows gratitude. Each year around my birthday, I try to give back. I don't really need presents, but so many others are in need. One year I told my classmates and my church congregation I was collecting shoes for Souls4Soles, an organization that makes sure people around the world have shoes. Did you know some African children can't go to school unless they have shoes? I was able to collect over 120 pairs of shoes! What an awesome feeling! My mom and I took them to a collection point in Defiance, OH, where they were then shipped through to places in our country and the world. Another time, I asked for care package items for our active duty soldiers. Again, I asked my classmates and congregation to help. Due to my idea, my classmates each wrote a letter to a soldier, telling about themselves, but also how thankful they were for our military. In the end, we collected six very large boxes full of items, from non-perishable food, hygiene products, letter writing supplies, and anything else that would make a soldier's life a little better. How hard it must be to be away from your family and the things you know. It cost over \$200 for my family and I to send the items to Operation Gratitude in California. The organization then boxes everything up in individual boxes for soldiers. I often wonder how many lives the items touched. I hope they brought a smile to a soldier's face. We owe our military so much! If it wasn't for them, we would not have the freedoms we do today. Even when I see a veteran in a store when I'm shopping, I stop to thank him for his service. Lastly, my mom and I volunteered one Saturday at the West Ohio Food Bank, packaging over 100 weekend meals to be provided to children at local schools. I learned that sometimes, the children's parents don't have enough money to feed their family or parents just don't prepare food for their children. The meals consisted of food the child could prepare himself. It made me appreciate each time I sit down with my family and have a meal.

Even though I am one person, I know I can make a difference in this world. It may not be large like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. or Gandhi did, but even if I'm able to touch one person's life, then I have made a difference. My goal is to continue making this world a better place with my actions and words. Do something today for someone you don't know and just maybe, that person will do something for another person because of your actions. Just think of how many lives could be touched. Even though I'm a 13 year old, if I can make a difference, so can you!

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Be the Change

