

2017 Make the Case for Caring Second Place Essay

Raksha Narasimhan wrote our second place essay for 2017. Sarah is a 16-year-old 11th grader from Lynbrook High School in San Jose, California.

Investing in a Ripple Effect

As an American middle-school student complains about his workload, fourteen-year-old Denis harbors a passion for learning so deep that it propels her to walk an hour each day to get to her school in Mali. While the average high-school student worries about maintaining her grade-point average, Mali student Niagalen's concerns center around holding off on marriage until she has completed her education. What is most remarkable about these children is their desire to help others. Whether it be by becoming a doctor or a teacher, they aspire to give back to the world even if they haven't been given much themselves.



I've spent countless nights in the comfort of my bed wondering what I did to deserve such privileges. Why, when there were so many people living in poverty and destitution among the world, did I get to grow up with a stable economic background and wonderful opportunities for education as a middle-class member of American society? I clearly wasn't in any way intellectually superior to the teenagers across the world who were forced to take on adult responsibilities in lieu of continuing their educations--and yet, I was blessed with all the educational opportunities they were not.

Looking for personal rewards in giving seems inherently counterintuitive. However, there truly is so much one can gain in the process of generosity. Empathy is something that is often lacking in modern society--this is evident in racism, in irrational phobias of other religions and beliefs. Giving is such a beautiful way to fight these evils--to annihilate the barriers that stand between us by forming connections with others. It has enormous potential to pave the way for a peaceful, more united world with far less hatred and bigotry. Giving truly is contagious--the plethora of positive feelings that come with such a noble deed could inspire a lifetime of generosity.

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The children of Mali, while incredibly intelligent and driven, likely have experienced little to no interaction with people of other nations. It would be beautiful to give them such a positive first impression of the world at large by allowing them to experience a stranger's love and support. The same way neglectful and abusive authority figures can stunt a child's development and cause them to turn to crime, exposure to unconditional support could enrich their faith in the world.

Investing in a noble cause such as education means that rewards grow exponentially. Contrary to a one-time donation of materialistic items such as money or supplies, donating to education would empower children. It would empower them, giving them the tools and opportunities to make drastic changes to their lives and contribute to our world on a larger scale. When we invest in the education of young children, we invest in their future.

Learn more about the Make the Case for Caring Essay Contest at www.malirisingfdn.org/essay.