




Little Acts of Kindness

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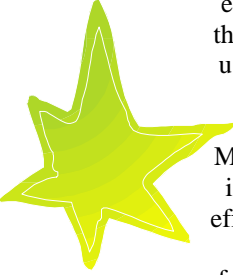


Valentine's Day always brings back special memories. I remember giving valentines to my classmates and picking flowers for my mother. I'll never forget my first young romance and receiving a special card. The feelings we experience when giving something to another person are special because they come from the heart.




It is important for children to learn at an early age that giving does not always result in getting something in return. Rewards received for unconditionally giving something or someone our best efforts bring more personal satisfaction in the long run.



While this concept is difficult for many to understand and apply, it is demonstrated in the area of philanthropy. A recent newspaper article I read discussed the decline of philanthropic efforts in our society today. Can you imagine what our society would be like if every child were taught to give something back to society?

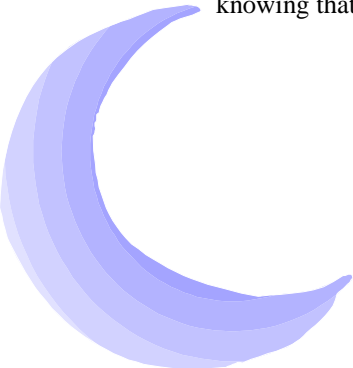


There are many opportunities for children to help other children, to preserve nature, and to enhance the lives of adults. Children can teach their friends as peer tutors, bake cookies for the school bake sale, or wash cars to help raise money for an organization. Cities can always use volunteers to help clean parks and playgrounds. Assisting the sick and lonely will bring smiles to the faces of those your little angel shines on.



Many organizations are in need of volunteers to help with projects, and an exciting opportunity is available to Orange county families. The Volunteer Center of Orange County supports the efforts of *Family Matters*, a *Points of Light Foundation* program. Family Matters' mission is to strengthen families and communities through family volunteering. Through volunteering, families can enrich their relationships, and they can gain valuable knowledge about challenges that others face. The Volunteer Center of Orange County (www.volunteercenter.org) lists several benefits to families who volunteer, and they are listed below:

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1. Adults and children share the same goal and a common purpose
 2. Children gain opportunities to share their time and talents.
 3. Family members encounter people from different cultural and economic backgrounds, and grow as more sensitive, knowledgeable human beings
 4. Family members see one another in a new light and with a fresh perspective.
 5. Family members become better at communicating and more supportive of each other.
 6. Volunteer experiences carry over into other parts of their lives, such as dinner table discussions, and strengthen the family as a unit.
 7. Children learn the lifetime lesson that by giving to others they put their own problems in perspective.



One of the greatest rewards that we can receive on a daily basis is the pride and satisfaction of knowing that we have made a difference in the lives of others. One is never too young for little acts of kindness! Happy Valentine's Day!

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