

AAARI Dr. K. York & M. Noelle Chynn CUNY Ethics and Morality Essay Contest Essay

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Theological Virtue of Charity

A Hero of Tomorrow

Kingsborough Community College

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It is October 1st, the beginning of a brand-new month. I woke up as early as I could and headed straight to the N train where I commuted to my older sister's house in Bay Ridge. I met up with my sister and her fiancé, and we walked two blocks to a local 99 cent store. We picked up one hundred balloons, which we paid for a couple of days earlier. Bundles of colors such as pink, purple, red, blue, and green, mixed with metallic colored balloons were taking up most of the store's ceiling. It was a very magical view, it reminded me of the movie "UP," which involved a house being carried away by tons of balloons. That is exactly how we looked like casually walking through streets of Bay Ridge.

Each of us were holding approximately thirty to forty balloons in our hands as we walked towards Owl's Head Park. Many people were mesmerized as they craned their necks from within pizzerias and bars. Some people said, "Happy Birthday," but it was no birthday... it was Balloon Day! We started handing out free balloons to a couple of young kids on our way to the park. They looked excited in awe from the balloons floating above their heads. We couldn't wait to start making people's day. We arrived at the playground and began handing out balloons explaining to kid's parents it was just a free balloon in celebration of Balloon Day.

However, on our way to the park, my sister's fiancé asked my sister what made her come up with the idea of giving back free balloons? She answered, "My grandmother inspired me to give back and expect nothing in return." In 2016, my only grandmother was terribly ill and passed away on my birthday in August. It was just a few days before my flight to go meet her for the first time in Mexico. I never had the experience of what it was like to have grandparents and to hear their stories of what it was like growing up. My sister and I arrived in time for her funeral ceremony. Many people such as friends and neighbors, gathered and shared memories of how much my grandmother cared about and gave back to her community.

I was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. Both of my parents are immigrants from Veracruz, Mexico. I became the first in my family to attend college. It's tough to be honest, but I feel like my outcomes in life must be meaningful, not only for me, but for my parents who struggled to leave their hometown and family in order to give my siblings and I better opportunities.

Many significant experiences impacted me while attending high school. I attended a small campus, High School for Public Service: Heroes of Tomorrow, within Wingate High school. Located on Kingston Ave, the school is known for its outstanding community service. Each student is required to do at least two hundred hours of community service. There is even a day dedicated for community service in which the high school takes part each year. The advisory groups from each grade go out to help their community for the whole school day. I remember cleaning up a beach and helping teachers at a daycare with young children. I also recall some of my friends going to senior centers and other peers making sandwiches for the homeless. I made up most of my community service hours by being a teacher's assistant for an earth science class in my senior year. I organized bookshelves and paperwork and tutored students. The most intriguing part of the high school that stands out as soon as you walk up is that it has a 1-acre farm. It's not a farm with live animals, but a farm with organic plants, and vegetables. The farm has a farmers' market every Wednesday which teachers, parents, and the community can stop by. This high school made me become more involved in the community by volunteering and making a difference.

The virtue of charity means being generous with your time and money. In addition, it allows us to give freely without expecting anything in return. The concept of charity is meant to be done for public benefit, relief or assisting people in times of need. "We asked 700 of our

generous donors to tell us what motivates them to give regularly to charity; 42% agreed the enjoyment they receive from giving as a key influence.” (Five Reasons to Give to Charity). According to Charities Aid Foundation [CAF] research has shown that the knowledge of giving back is an empowering feeling which is correlated to parts of the brain that registers pleasure. Giving back to charity makes you feel good, strengthens personal values, and encourages the importance of generosity. According to the Quran, Prophet Muhammed states, “Every act of kindness is charity.” It is as simple as giving someone a smile and the act of extending love and kindness unconditionally.

Although, some may say charity begins in one's home, others believe it originates from the heart. Personally, I believe the urge of giving originates from the heart that begins from one's home. Family and individuals, you surround yourself with play a major role in your life. They shape you to who you are by nurturing you, influencing your values, help you make life choices and determine right from wrong. Based from my experience, the people who inspire me are my mother and my sister. They have taught me the importance of giving back in small acts of kindness and remaining humble.

In the concrete jungle of New York City, with a population of 20.1 million, it is effortlessly easy for people to mind their business. Today, virtues are slowly being forgotten in people's daily lives. “Everyone has problems, troubles, and griefs of some sort in life, but charity starts with those who learn to downplay their own problems, in order to extend compassion, kindness, and love to help others.” (Transparent Hands). Charity, including other virtues, is important because it creates meaning in our everyday lives. A wise man once said, “Be the change you wish to see in the world” (Mahatma Gandhi). Overall, giving back to my community is a rewarding feeling. As a hero of tomorrow, I will use my creativity for a good

cause and inspire the youth through social media platforms to also engage with their community.

Works Cited

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