

Youth Count Column: November 2012: “Community Service – Whose job is it?”

I'm sure have you heard youth – or maybe even adults – when asked to help with a chore or project, respond with "It's not my job." It's reality; it happens - but not so much with our communities' kids!

Our local communities are blessed with youth who believe in providing service to others and we are blessed with adults who encourage youth through their words and actions.

Take Lauren McNeeley for example. As a high school student she certainly has enough school work to keep her busy, yet she devotes significant time providing support to our military personnel and their families. She has provided child care military family members meet to plan support for soldiers. She also serves as a mentor to freshman students at Floyd Central High School.

Each year many, many dozens of students in Floyd and Clark Counties, like Ryan Plunkett, Jill Ricchio, and Gage Griffin, and Morgan Reilly participate in Miles for Merry Miracles, a youth initiated and youth led program culminating in the adoption of Angels from The Salvation Army Angel Tree. Not including this year's numbers, over 1,050 have been adopted the past four years. The youth volunteers fundraise, plan and implement a 5K fun run/walk, shop for the children, and even provide dinner to a couple of hundred angels and their families each year.

6th grade student Caroline Martin, who loves to draw, created and mailed several dozen “thank you” cards for soldiers serving in Afghanistan. She just wanted them to know that people are thinking about them and praying for them.

If you look around, you will see countless more examples of our youth serving others. Community service can be planned, such as collecting canned goods for a food drive or visiting the elderly. Community service can also be spontaneous such as opening the door for someone or offering an encouraging word.

Serving others is a great way for youth to explore their values and passions in life while also experiencing the gratification of helping a person in need. We all have the opportunity to give to others in both big and small ways. It is our job - and our young people's job - to help others and have an attitude of service.

Learn more or share ideas by contacting Youth Count at barbara@youthcount.com or 812-923-1160 or by visiting www.youthcount.com .

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