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St. Michael

Behind The Pigtails

Kids don't try to make differences.

Ever since I was very young, I liked to make collections. Quarters, stuffed animals, rocks, shells, stickers, bracelets, and anything you can think of. Although, I wasn't very good at it. I usually got about three of the thing I wanted to collect, then forgot about it.

So one day, when I was eight, I saw a cool, blue pop tab from a soda can and decided I wanted to collect those. I walked up to my mom and told her about my new collection of pop tabs (total: 1). My mom just rolled her eyes and thought about my other "hundred" collections, and even though she knew it would end tomorrow, I was sure this one would last! Over the period of a month I watched my collection grow (total: 52). I showed it off to everyone: my friends, my brother, and all my relatives. I collected for a whole year (total: 884). I had round ones, square ones, blue ones, and even green ones! I filled up three whole bags.

I was so proud of my collection that one day I decided to count them just for fun (total: 997). While I was counting them, my mom came home from work and told me that her work started collecting pop tabs to help Shriners Burn Institute for kids. Shriners recycles the tabs and uses the money for play equipment and toys for the kids in the hospital. When I heard that, I knew I wanted to give my collection to them. I had three and a half big bags to give to my mom. I felt very good, so I started collecting pop tabs again that day to give to Shriners (total: 1). At a family party when I was nine, I told my grandma and aunt about my pop tabs going to Shriners. This inspired them so much that they started collecting too! I saw my aunt and grandma only a few months later and they had whole bags full to give to me (total: 765). I saved those so I could have a huge collection to give to them at once.

As I collected more when I was ten, I was looking through the mail and saw I got a letter from Speedy, the clown in charge of Shrine Circus. It said that Shrine Circus is in town and that I was invited to come and get escorted to the clown room to meet him. My mom told me to bring the rest of my tab tops to give to Speedy. I pulled out my "secret weapons", the two bags my aunt and grandma gave me. I also had a bag of pop tabs I collected myself (total: 932). After the show, we met up with Speedy in the clown room and gave him my bags of pop tabs for Shriners Burn Institute. He looked very impressed, said thank you a lot, and gave me a big hug.

I am now 14 and my latest collection was given to Shriners about two weeks ago. I collected for 6 whole years! (Over-all total: Too many to count!). I still love doing this for two

reasons; I get to drink pop a lot without my parents yelling at me, and, most importantly, I know I am helping young kids who have been seriously burned feel better. The second reason is the one that has made me keep up with my collection for this long.

So next time you just do a little thing, think about it, you may have changed the lives of people around you. Even just a little smile to a stranger or picking up a book someone dropped at school can leave people inspired. It doesn't matter if you're eight or eighty; you can still do little things to make someone's day. Young kids are sometimes the best at making a difference in their family or even community when they are not even trying.

Kids don't try to make differences; they just do.