

Aubrey Rose Foundation Scholarship
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I love to make people laugh and smile. A few years ago my mentor told me that my smile was very contagious, and ever since I've been smiling to make people happy

I am in a program called Delta Academy and there we do a lot of volunteering. Around Christmas time we visited a nursing home to spread a little Christmas cheer. There were about 25 senior citizens in the room that we entered. We scattered around to sit and talk individually with a resident, I noticed that there was a gentleman sitting isolated from the crowd and that none of my peers would go near him. I went to get a closer look and noticed two things: both of his legs were amputated and that he had the saddest looking eyes that I've ever seen. I went over to sit by him to try to cheer him up. I was quiet for a moment because I didn't know what I could talk to him about. After a while, I asked him what type of stuff did he enjoy doing. He replied that since his legs got removed he couldn't do the stuff he enjoyed anymore. Then I asked him why he had to get his legs removed. I had already figured that he was a soldier and something led to him being amputated, but he told me something different. He said that huge blood clots formed in his legs and if he didn't have them removed he would of died. The mood was depressing so I changed the tone of the conversation. I asked him did he know how to play checkers and he said, " Of course. I've been playing since before your ma was walking." I laughed and then he said that he was the best checker player in his hometown of Tupelo, Mississippi. I told him about my visits to Tupelo and my family that lives there. Turned out that he knew my great aunt that lived there. I pulled out the checkerboard and set up the pieces. As we played he told me about his childhood and adult life. As he spoke I could see the delight in his eyes as he reminisced about the good times. I was smiling while he was talking and he stopped mid-sentence and said, " You know you have a smile that can brighten up a man's week?" I was flattered that he felt that I made him happier.

In the end he beat me in checkers, but I was just happy that he had a smile across his face. That was the best Christmas present that I ever received.