GIVING SERVICE

GIVING A LITTLE SOMETHING BACK

ED U. GATOR JOINS A TEAM

AN AUTHOR PROVIDES A GREAT SERVICE
We all need help doing things from time to time. You might need help lifting or moving a box or a big piece of furniture. You might need some help reading a word or figuring out a math problem. You should never feel bad about needing or asking for help.

Think about it. Doesn’t it feel great to help somebody else? The last time you opened a door for somebody or helped somebody carry something heavy, didn’t it make you feel good about yourself? When we give of ourselves to someone else, we get something special in return: feeling good! Most of the time we get a thank you too. Sometimes we even get paid. But that’s just icing on the cake!

So you give something, then you get something, then you can turn around and give it back again! It’s kind of like “recycling” good stuff. Talking about recycling, that’s one of the very best ways to give service and get something back. The Earth needs our help in a big way. The Earth needs us to pick up trash and reuse whatever precious resources we can, like paper, bottles and aluminum cans. Even the Earth gives us something back for our efforts. We get to look at beautiful grass and plants and trees, and we get to breathe clean air and drink clean water. That’s a pretty big return for just a little bit of work!

**VOCABULARY:**

*Precious:* very fine and rare.
*Resources:* belongings or supplies.

**ACTIVITY:**

Take a walk around your favorite field or park. Are the people who visit this spot respectful of its beauty? Is there trash around, or is it really clean? If it needs some extra help, what could you do to make it, and keep it, clean?
Hi friends. Ed here. We’re finally settling in to our new home in Gatorsville Park. The move took two days and was really hard work, but we survived. We only had one casualty: Gramps threw his back out moving a heavy box by himself. I think he’s going to take it easy for a few days!

Dad said we passed a baseball field on the way to our house. After the last box was unloaded, El and I took a walk down the street. Sure enough, there’s a great park with a baseball diamond, tennis courts and a track just three blocks away! When El and I got there a crowd of crocs and gators were building something. When we got closer it looked like some kind of ramp. One of the gators was in a wheelchair, but he was hammering blocks of wood with the rest of them.

“Need some help?” I asked. “Sure,” they said. So I introduced myself and my sister El and we picked up some blocks and nails and joined right in. It turns out the gator in the wheelchair, Gabe, loves to play baseball, but he can’t get his wheelchair up the three concrete steps to the field.

But he can now! With everyone pitching in we got the ramp finished fast, and we still had enough daylight left to play a few innings. That’s what you call teamwork!

Gabe is a great ballplayer. He zips around the field in his chair, catching fly balls and hitting home runs. He’s got a killer throw from right field to home plate. I should know, he threw me out three times in a row!

I’m glad I got to help Gabe. If I hadn’t helped, I wouldn’t have met the other crocs and gators too. Even El made some new friends. I think it’s going to be a great year!

QUESTIONS

1) How could Gramps have saved himself from getting hurt?

2) Even though Gabe was in a wheelchair, he was a great athlete. What was the one thing he needed help with?

3) Think about your school. What kind of adjustments have been made to help people in wheelchairs?

4) What did Ed mean by the term teamwork?

5) Ed found an easy way to make new friends. Can you think of some other ways?
COMMUNITY HELPERS

Directions: Some people have occupations that help or serve the community. How many can you think of? List them below. Then think of someone you know who does one of these jobs. Write a sentence or two about what that person does.

REUSE IT!

Directions: Paper, glass and aluminum are three of the most recycled items. How many things can you list that are made up of these materials?
IN THE NEWSPAPER

**Directions:** In the classified or help wanted section of the newspaper, there are many listings for people asking for help, and for people offering help. Look through the section and pick out a few that interest you. Are any of the services listed things you’ve thought about doing?

LANDSCAPE YOUR DREAM HOUSE!

**Directions:** Below is a pretty cool looking house to live in. But the property around the house is empty and could really use some work. Use your vivid imagination and fill in the spaces with grass, bushes, trees, strange animals, whatever!
Ever since Jody was a little boy, he dreamed about working on a farm. He imagined himself driving a tractor, harvesting crops and feeding cows, chickens, pigs and horses. When Jody was 10, his family moved to the country. Their neighbor up the street was a nice old man named Foster, who had 50 acres of farm land.

Every day after school, Jody would run up the road to Foster's farm. Most days he would just watch the old man doing his chores, but sometimes Foster let Jody help. At those times, Jody was in his glory, willing to do whatever he could around the fields and barns. Foster had never been married and most of his family had passed away, so he was grateful for Jody's company and help. In return, Foster taught Jody everything he knew about farming.

Jody spent as much time on the farm as he could. He was much more interested in working hard than playing with the other kids in town. As Foster got older and less able to finish his daily chores, Jody helped out more and more. On weekends he would work at the farm from sun up to sun down. Foster frequently offered to pay Jody for his efforts, but Jody knew the old man had very little money. Besides, he was happy to be a real live farmer for free.

When Jody was 17 years old, Foster became very ill. He grew so weak that he could barely get out of bed. One day he beckoned Jody to his side. "Jody," he said, "I won't be around too much longer. I thought about selling the farm, but watching you day after day, tending the crops and the animals, I know what I must do. I am leaving my farm to you." Jody was surprised, but honored that Foster would give him such a big responsibility. He thanked Foster, and promised he would always make the old man proud. "I know that," Foster said. Even after Foster died, Jody worked hard to make his farm the finest in the land.

— By Ned Andrew Solomon
Rachel Carson was born on May 27, 1907, in Springdale, Pennsylvania. As a young girl, she loved to read books and write stories. At the age of 10, she sold her first story to a magazine. While in school, Carson became fascinated by the world of science, especially the study of plants and animals. She later became a biologist and worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. She enjoyed learning about the ocean, and wrote several books including *The Sea Around Us*, which is still popular today and has been translated into more than 40 languages.

Because Carson loved the natural world, she became concerned about the heavy use of chemicals in farming and industry. One of the most widely used chemicals was DDT, a pesticide that Carson believed was killing helpful insects, birds, and animals. She warned that the continued use of these pesticides would eventually be harmful to humans, too. She wrote about her concerns in *The Silent Spring*, which greatly changed the way the world felt about wildlife and the environment. People became more respectful of our natural resources, like the air and the water.

Her powerful writing is partially responsible for laws being changed to protect the Earth, including a law making it illegal to use DDT. Rachel Carson has provided a great service, by opening our eyes to the wonder, and preservation, of the world around us.

**VOCABULARY:**

- Biologist: someone who studies living things.
- Translate: to put into words of a different language.
- Pesticide: a poison used to kill insects and weeds.
- Industry: a type of business.
**TIPS**

1) Our children are growing up in a society that has a greater awareness of the Earth and its natural resources. Many children’s television shows have plots that center around environmental issues such as recycling and energy conservation. It would help if we could show the same respect at home by recycling bottles, cans and newspapers, and by turning off water and lights when they are not being used.

2) The numbers of homeless people are growing every year. We cannot shield our children forever from the harsh realities of poverty and homelessness. It is important that we teach our children about these issues in a positive way and refrain from using negative terms to describe people who are less fortunate. Encourage discussions about ways we might help the homeless and the poor.

3) Our kids will never learn how to be good helpers, unless we let them help! It’s hard to let go of the belief that everything will get done faster, and better, if we do it ourselves. If your child wants to help with something, slow down and let him/her learn by trial and error. When he/she finally masters a task it will encourage his/her self-esteem, and might help you out in the long run.

4) As always, reward positive behavior. Make an extra big deal when your child does something helpful for you, a sibling or a friend. If your child sees his positive actions have been observed, and appreciated, he will continue to look for more “helping” opportunities.

**FAMILY ACTIVITY**

In our busy lives, we sometimes forget about older relatives who are not living with us. Take the opportunity to visit a grandparent or an elderly friend you haven’t seen in a while. Senior citizens have a great deal of life experience and wonderful stories to tell. If they don’t live nearby, sit down and write a family letter to an older relative or friend and send some recent photos. It will be greatly appreciated and might open up some lines of communication that haven’t been used for awhile.

**RESOURCES**