

Dear For the Kid in All of Us,

My name is Amos Bishop, and I am an ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) teacher at Lithia Springs Elementary School in Lithia Springs Georgia. Our school was one of the lucky beneficiaries of the toys collected at your recent Toy Party charity event. I also had the privilege of working at the event and seeing your wonderful organization in action.

I cannot begin to tell you what an amazing gift these toys were to the students of my school. The students I work with in my program are among the most underprivileged of all the students in our school. Many families struggle to meet even basic needs, and extravagant gifts for Christmas are simply out of the question for most of my students. Through the generosity of your organization and the many benefactors who made the event possible, my students were able to feel the joy and magic of the holiday season. As their teacher, I am forever grateful for that.

I could tell you numerous specific stories of how your gifts made such a profound difference, but I would instead like to focus on one that touched me personally. One Monday morning in November, I arrived to work with my fifth grade students. Monday is always a time for catching up, sharing the details of the weekend and goals for the upcoming week. One of my precious female students was very quiet, and I could tell she was visibly shaken by something. I privately asked her how she was, and she proceeded to tell me that she was terrible, stating that her father had been forced to leave the family that morning in an attempt to find work in another state. She went on to state that her mother had also already informed her that there was very little money for Christmas, and as the oldest child, this eleven year old girl would be receiving nothing so that the younger children in the family could at least have something to open on Christmas Day. The pain in this child's face and demeanor were indescribable. Always one to attempt to comfort, I was at a loss for words myself. How do you try to explain a situation like that to a child? Fortunately, within a couple of days, I was informed by my principal that our school had been selected as a beneficiary of toys from your organization. Words cannot express the relief I felt, knowing that this child, and many like her, would be spared the pain of feeling forgotten.

To those of us who worked at the event or donated toys, what was collected was simply toys. However, to the recipients and their families, it was much more. The gifts collected represented hope. These children knew that they were loved, important, and unforgotten. In taking part in this program and seeing the benefits thereof, I was reminded of a story Oprah Winfrey has shared many times, in which she recalled an experience much like the one my student endured. She went on to detail how a woman from a local church arrived at her door with a Tammy doll for her. Although she had not played with dolls for several years, the gift meant the world to her. That giving stuck with her and helped mold her into the phenomenal woman she became. The children who were blessed by your giving are our future, and they will go on to do great things, all the while remembering that someone cared for them. Thank you so much for your faithfulness to the children of our community. May you be blessed in your continued efforts.

Sincerely,

Mr. Amos M. Bishop