



Second-Place Winning Entry

Changed Forever

Ever since I can remember, I have dreamed of helping people. Whenever I saw people in need, I always felt drawn to help them in some way. As I went through the REAL. LIFE. Exhibit, I felt guilty that I would spend money on things I don't need when there are others less fortunate than me who don't have anything.

I've always thought about being a pediatrician, but now I know that I can help people whether I become a pediatrician or not. These people need others to see their pain and desperation. I was so blinded that I didn't see, but now that I have been to the REAL. LIFE. Exhibit, I know of the horrors of the world. I can be their voice for those who will not hear it from their mouths. I will make sure that these people will be taken care of.

I thank God for all that he has done for me. I have the love of family and friends—while the children in the Romanian Orphanage have never felt love and care. I always have fresh water and a stocked pantry—while refugees are struggling day to day. I have a beautiful home—while people are still recovering from the Indonesian tsunami and Hurricane Katrina, and while people in Mexico live in the garbage dumps. I don't have to worry about being taken away—while that is the daily thought of children in Uganda suffering because of the Lord's Resistance Army. Whenever I get hurt, I have easy access to the hospital with state-of-the-art equipment—but the Moldovan burn unit is known for death.

When I left the exhibit, I thought seriously about what I could do to help people. I could start a donation jar and put the money I would have used for something that I didn't need in there. Even though I'm not old enough to go to around the world, I can still do a lot of volunteer work here. Volunteering comes from the heart, not from the head. You have to *want* to help. All people need to do is take thirty seconds out of their day to pray. I know that if people would find the time or donate their own spare change, the world would be a better place. After going through the REAL. LIFE. Exhibit, I will never be the same again. The phrase "I'm only one person, but I can make a difference" is not an exact statement of how I feel. How I feel is "I am only one person, but I WILL make a difference."

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Age 12

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