

“TREASURE LIFE” IN ACTION

By Tony Johnson

One of my fundamental beliefs with the Treasure Life program is that we tell students what not to do, but we spend little time telling them what they can do.

And even less time acknowledging good character such as teamwork, respect, education, adversity, sportsmanship, responsibility and effort.

It's been over six years now since I started talking with area students about the importance of building strong character values through the Treasure Life program.

In that time, I have talked with hundreds of young people in the Peoria area and have witnessed many positive character examples. I'd like to share some of these “character inspirations” with you:

(Note: some names have been changed to protect individual privacy)

The importance of school and education:

During a recent visit to Northwoods Mall, I was approached by a young 5th grade student who I had talked with during a Treasure Life visit to Roosevelt Magnet School.

Kenisha proudly informed me that she was doing a lot better in school and that her grades were getting better. She also informed me that she wanted to go to college and play basketball.

Making the most of who you are:

An avid Pirates and sports fan, Josh has been confined to a wheel chair for most of his life. Despite this handicap, Josh continues to live a strong a normal life.

He has a regular job, has a girlfriend and has been a first place finisher in several events at the Special Olympics. He is an inspiration to all those around him.

Sportsmanship in action:

It is especially pleasing to see strong character traits portrayed in your own children. My daughter, Missy, was playing basketball for Metamora in a recent summer tournament in El Paso.

In the 1st quarter, the opposing team lost a player to injury and only had four players available. Without hesitation, Missy volunteered to play on the other team so that the game could continue.

Making the right decisions:

Nate (a local high school student athlete) was out with friends on a Friday night. At a party, several of his peers had obtained alcohol and were proceeding to get drunk.

Not wanting to be involved (it is illegal to drink under that age of 21 you know) Nate makes the decision to leave the party ... and convinces two of his friends to go with him. They enjoy a late browse through thru Barnes and Noble Their peers at the party are busted!

Respect for others:

At a recent Rivermen game, 6 year old Ben was closely watching the teams warm-up. One of the players acknowledged him leaning against the glass by tossing a puck over to him.

Ben quickly grabbed the puck, looked at it, turned around and gave it to a young child sitting four rows behind.

I approached Ben and told him what a nice thing he had done. Be replied, “ I got one before and I thought the little girl would like one too.”

Remember, “Treasure Life ... Everyday!”



Quote to remember:

“You cannot dream yourself into a character, you must hammer and forge yourself one.”

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“Treasure Life” is a positive life message created by Caterpillar manager and Peoria Pirates coach, Tony Johnson. The program encourages students to be “pirates” by filling their “treasure” chests each day with some of life’s most valuable traits, values and experiences. The “Treasure Life” program has been recognized as one of the Arena Football League’s best community relations program.