

Community Spirit

Helping Kids Help The Community

(NAPSA)—Whether playing sports, sitting in the classroom or singing in the school choir, kids are molded by the adults around them. So how can adults shape their young lives for the better?

One way is to introduce kids to community service and show them the importance of bettering their own neighborhoods at an early age. Doing activities as a family or through school programs sets an example that can leave a lasting impression. After all, according to German/French philosopher Albert Schweitzer, “Example is not the main thing in influencing others, it is the only thing.”

One company has picked up on this philosophy. For seven years, Doubletree Hotels’ Teaching Kids To Care program has educated students on local and global environmental and social issues by encouraging them to make conscious decisions to benefit their communities and the world. This year, it’s teaming up with students and teachers nationwide to help fight world hunger. According to the United Nations, over 1 billion people suffer from hunger worldwide—an unprecedented, historic high. And yet, hunger is just one of the many issues facing communities today.

For parents and teachers wanting to encourage their kids and students to make a difference in the community, here are some tips for channeling their inner humanitarian:



Photo courtesy of Doubletree Hotels

Parents and teachers can show youngsters how to improve the community and themselves at the same time.

1. Identify Your Neighborhood’s Needs: Research the issues facing your community to find a cause you can support. Saving the world can get overwhelming, so narrowing the focus to a cause that you are passionate about is the best way to start. Libraries, schools, newspapers and Web sites can be good resources to discover where support is needed.

2. Participate in a Food Drive: Hunger has no boundaries. Look to businesses, schools and churches that host food drives. For example, Doubletree Hotels works with students to host “Great Community Food Collection” drives, encouraging family, friends and fellow citizens to help feed the hungry through food donations. You can explore similar opportunities with food banks to directly connect your child to the hunger needs present in your own community.

3. Volunteer: Contact a rescue mission, nonprofit organization or

senior citizens center to determine the best way to get your family involved. Rescue missions often need help sorting donations or making care packages for families in need. For a more hands-on approach, take your family to a senior citizens home or center so kids can play games or plant flowers with the elderly. By volunteering for a couple hours a week, kids are not only helping the community, they learn life lessons of generosity and service.

4. Lend a Hand with Hand-Me-Downs: Kids outgrow clothing faster than you can say “growth spurt.” Their closets turn into a black hole of clothing, benefiting nothing but the dust mites. One simple way to make a difference is to clean out the closets twice a year. Clothes and books that have not seen the light of day for a year or more can be donated to a donation center or shelter.

5. Recycling Is a Walk in the Park: There are numerous ways to tweak your routine to improve the environment and beauty of the community. Take a weekly family walk through the park to gather litter and recyclables. Doing this activity together not only provides quality family time, it teaches kids the value of recycling and beautifies the neighborhood.

To learn more about how you can make a difference, visit the Teaching Kids to CARE Web site at www.doubletree.com/thinktrees.