



## GREAT KIDS

*By Marilyn Sharpe*

We've all watched the news, listened to the radio, and read the newspaper ... and the news about kids is not great. If you were to profile today's kids, these news sources would tell you that youth are violent, self-absorbed, lazy, unproductive, and rankly materialistic. This is the commonly held opinion of today's kids.

But I am here to tell you a different story.

On an early winter evening, I was working late at The Youth & Family Institute, when I heard the outside door open. I walked our beloved volunteer, Ginger, followed by her husband Larry, also a volunteer, and their eleven year old grandson, Corey Anderson. The door opened one more time, and in came Ginger and Larry's son, Scott, with four high school youth from St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Sam Moheban, Luke Woodruff, Dana Underdahl, and Morgan Wright. Within minutes, our reception area was transformed into a cross between Santa's workshop, with elves in high gear, and the dwarf's cottage, cleaned and transformed by Snow White and the woodland creatures. Laughter floated down the hall, sounds of high, holy hilarity. Snippets of engaged conversation were audible. I ventured out into the reception area and saw a flurry of busyness, everyone compiling resources at warp speed. The pile of components dwindled; the pile of completed resources reached toward the ceiling. Here were volunteers, with willing hearts and joyful attitudes. And they are kids, great kids!

Corey said, "Grampa, this is fun! This is more fun than going sledding. Can we do this again?" The high school youth smiled when I commented on how much I appreciated both their hard work and their awe inspiring attitude.

When I left a little later, I bid them a fond farewell. Snow had fallen and I brushed it off my car, and drove off. Or, I intended to ... until my car slid into a snow bank. And who do you think rescued me? Yes, it was Sam, Luke, Dana, Morgan, and Corey. It wasn't just a push, but a push, shove, shovel, push, shove, shovel, and I was off, thanks to these five kids, great kids!

Why isn't this the story you last heard or read about youth in 2008? So, let's do it differently, on their behalf. I'd like to deputize each and every one of you adults who reads this column to go "catch" kids being great kids.

Catch your own kids! Don't wait for the huge accomplishments; catch them being thoughtful, helpful, caring, kind ... and tell them what they've done right and how much you appreciate it. Catch other kids doing the same things ... and tell them. Then, go tell somebody else. Tell adults. Tell the media. Tell other kids. Let's make the news.

God has created great kids and placed them in our midst. We just need to "catch" them and let the world know.

### FAMILY ACTIVITIES

1. Catch each kid in your life doing something right. Describe the behavior. Thank them.
2. Label your kids as "great kids."
3. Let your kids overhear you speaking on the phone, or live to another adult, telling them what great kids you have.
4. Pray aloud and thank God for your great kids.
5. Catch another kid to whom you are not related being a great kid! Tell them.
6. Call a local TV station and report on great kids ... and ask them to cover it.



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