

A Child Can Make a Difference

by: Rachel Paxton Sometimes dreams really can come true! May 8th - 11th, 2000, my daughter and I traveled to Disney World in Orlando, Florida, because of a dream my daughter, Amanda, has to make a difference in this world. Amanda (then a 6th grader) entered McDonald's Millennium Dreamer contest and told them about her contributions to the humane society and her dream of making the world a better place for animals. Amanda's dream is to help homeless pets find homes, and she makes this dream a reality by writing a newsletter and donating all her profits to the humane society. Her entry won her and a parent an all-expenses-paid trip to Disney World to meet with other Millennium Dreamers from all over the world. 2,000 kids were chosen in all--1,000 from the U.S., and 1,000 from 90 other countries. The kids' accomplishments were recognized in an awards ceremony where Christopher Reeves and the CEO of McDonald's corporation were among the key note speakers. Each congratulated the kids on all they have done and encouraged them to continue their efforts, emphasizing the fact that their contributions are the key to our future. One of the most exciting parts of the trip was trading pins with the kids from other countries. Amanda came home with pins from Germany, South Africa, Israel, Korea, U.K., and Indonesia, just to name a few. The kids were given free passes to all the theme parks and treated to firework shows, parties, and lots of other entertainment. It was quite an event! Fun as well as inspirational. So what does all this have to do with you? Your child, too, can make a difference! The majority of the children who participated in the Millennium Dreamers event were between the ages of 8- 12. These kids each had one thing in common. They have a dream. Everyone has dreams. It's just a matter of whether or not they're ever acted upon. Most children have big dreams there's no way they could materialize on their own. This is where you come in. And I don't mean step in and try to fulfill their dreams for them. That would take up every minute of every day! Just be there for your kids and listen to their dreams. Encourage them to reach out to those around them and make a difference in the world. The younger children learn this the better...selfless children turn into selfless teenagers and then empowered adults. Involving your children in the community keeps them out of trouble and teaches them life-long skills in responsibility and how to work with others. Children do not learn these skills on their own. When your child asks you to donate food and toys to a local food drive or charity, give willingly and help them spend some of their own money or give away some of their own toys to help out. Most children love being able to give what little they have to others. One Millennium Dreamer was too young to ride in the local bike-a-thon to raise money for charity, so he organized his own neighborhood bike-a-thon for kids and has raised more than \$4,000 to help fight cancer. One girl was saddened to see foster kids moving from house to house with their belongings in garbage bags. She started going to yard sales to find duffel bags for them to carry their belongings in and now adds a stuffed animal and personal note from her in each. A large corporation heard about what she is doing and now donates all the duffel bags she can give away. Another boy was sad to see kids who couldn't afford school supplies and started going around to office supply stores asking for donations. Office Depot soon became his corporate sponsor and now donates all the office supplies he needs. Opportunities are out there wherever you look. See if your community has an office that organizes volunteer efforts in your area. The next time your child comes up with a great idea to make a contribution to your community, give it a chance and help them out. You'll be amazed at the gradual changes in your child as you continually encourage these ideas. Our children are tomorrow's future. Help them help us make this world a better place to live!

About the Author

Originally published at Suite 101. Rachel Paxton is a freelance writer, mom, and owner of four home and family web sites. For complete resources for the Christian home, visit her web site at <http://www.Christian-Parent.com>.

Source: <http://www.serverforever.com>