



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on February 2, 2015

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The Goodness of America

The Extra Yard

Americans have been so inundated with negative news stories involving various professional football players that any football fan could quickly become jaded about the nature of the high-paid athletes. But such a judgment would be completely unfair to someone such as Oakland Raiders' offensive lineman Menelik Watson, who has taken four-year-old Ava Urrera of Las Vegas into his heart.

In fact, the Oakland Raiders franchise as a whole showcased its genuine goodness. Yahoo News reported, "The Raiders offered young Ava, who has undergone 14 different procedures on her heart, the opportunity to 'captain' the team, and gave her signed gear and toys throughout a visit with the team."

Ava was in attendance at the Raiders' December 21 game against the Buffalo Bills.

But Watson took it a step further. He donated his entire game check, worth \$18,000, to help Ava's family pay her medical expenses.

Yahoo News elaborated on the magnitude of Watson's kind gesture: "It's not a small gesture, particularly from a second-year player who's in a profession whose careers can be measured in just a handful of years. NFL players are paid in 17 installments over the course of the year, not 52, so Watson just donated almost 6 percent of his entire salary."

For Watson, Ava's happiness was simply more important. When he donated his game check, he told Ava's father, "Sir, I would like to make sure Ava has the greatest holiday."

What's more, Watson later tweeted about his team's upset victory over the Buffalo Bills, but did not mention his donation to the family.

Tragedy and Kindness

Kind strangers and grief-stricken family members have revealed their true natures in the wake of a tragedy.

On November 6, Laylah Peterson was fatally shot by a stray bullet while sitting on her grandfather's lap in her Milwaukee, Wisconsin, home, the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reported. When news of Laylah's death spread, well-wishers delivered dozens of stuffed animals to the family's home where the shooting occurred.

"Looking at my parents' house, it was so overwhelming," Laylah's mother, Ashley Fogl, said.

And in an effort to give back, Laylah's family decided to donate the stuffed animals, approximately 50, to the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin so that they might bring cheer to other children and families in need. "It feels touching to give," said Fogl. "It makes me feel happy to bring a smile to another child's face."

Additionally, Laylah's family elected to donate Laylah's heart to someone in need, an act that was celebrated on a Rose Bowl Parade float on New Year's Day.



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For Children's Sake

High-school football fields across the country have witnessed devastating tragedies resulting from injuries, and New York Giants co-owner Steve Tisch does what he can to prevent further injury or loss of life.

Tisch believes that having certified athletic trainers and EMTs available for high-school football programs might save lives and reduce injury severity. In December, he donated \$1.2 million to the New York City Department of Education for the city's 53 public high-school programs to hire trainers and EMTs.

"A lot of parents are concerned about their kids playing contact sports," Tisch said at a press conference, standing alongside Victor Cruz. "But as a parent, my level of confidence and comfort is greatly increased if I know that there are trained coaches as well as trainers who can recognize concussion symptoms, know concussion protocols, and I hope that's one of the real benefits of this program."

According to Yahoo News, the donation was Tisch's second major one of the year. In May, he donated \$10 million to UCLA's concussion research program. Tisch's donation will make it possible to focus on training neurologists in youth concussion diagnosis and studying the connection between concussions and long-term brain damage. Tisch's donation marked the single largest gift from an individual to a medical center for a concussion-related initiative.

Hair and Heart of Gold

William Shakespeare once said, "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them." Three-year-old Ariana of Winterport, Maine, might be a prime example of those who are born great.

ABC News reported that Ariana told her parents that she wanted to donate her hair.

Ariana's father explained, "I do a charity called Extra Life where I play video games to help raise money for kids. Ariana happened to be sitting on my lap when a video played showing a little girl who was bald, lying in a hospital bed with tubes in her."

Extra Life is a charity that raises money for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals through video gaming.

Ariana had a lot of questions regarding the little girl on the screen, and her parents explained that the girl was very sick and that the medicine she was taking to get better caused her to lose her hair.

According to Ariana's parents, Ariana immediately said, "Well she can have some of my hair."

Her parents were so pleased with Ariana's show of selflessness that they began to research organizations to which she could donate hair and selected Locks of Love.

On November 21, Ariana went to a salon and had her beautiful blond hair cut to donate to the organization.

"It was her first haircut," Smith told ABC News. "She could be so selfless like that. Her first reaction is 'How about I give up something that I have so a little girl can feel pretty.'"



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According to Ariana's parents, giving to others comes naturally to their daughter. "I think she's just a caring person," Ariana's father told the Huffington Post. "She has a little play set of medical devices which she uses often. I've had my blood pressure and heart rate 'checked' hundreds of times this year."



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