



Goodness of America

High Help

An eyewitness named Michal Klein saw beautiful human charity in a surprising place — the New York City subway system. On August 26, an unnamed suicidal woman crawled across a section of beams in the Broadway and Lafayette subway station, approximately 20 feet above the ground. Before Klein could even react, she witnessed a young man follow the woman across the beams and sit alongside her to talk her through whatever was plaguing her.

“The only thing I overheard was the young girl saying nobody cares about her,” Klein, of Hoboken, New Jersey, told the *New York Daily News*.

According to Klein, who captured a photo of the scene, the young man put his arm around the woman and talked her through whatever drove her to climb the beam that day. She said that the young man stayed with the woman until emergency personnel arrived.

“I hope she gets [the] help that she needs,” wrote Klein in her social media post. “And bravo to the young man for risking his own safety to help.”

“He actually cared enough, whoever he was, to help her. A lot of people seemed to be like ‘Oh, it’s New York,’ and kept walking,” Klein told CBS New York. “I don’t know what I would’ve done. I don’t think I would’ve climbed over to do that.”

Paying It Forward

Vanessa Howard lived a hard life, but now that she has turned it around, she has decided to inspire other young girls who find themselves in similarly difficult situations.

CBS News reported that Howard was a teen mom, victimized by domestic abuse. She recalls having three children of her own and just \$1.75 in her pocket when she decided that she needed to leave her drug-infested home in Tampa, Florida.

She had the good fortune to meet a landlord who was willing to rent her an apartment, and she began working at local beauty salons to make money.

The kindness that landlord showed Howard was the catalyst that would inspire her to do well for herself, as well as to do good for others. “It was from there that I found hope and restoration. I just wanted to pay it forward.”

Fast forward a few decades and Howard now has her own salon, named Giving Hands Hair Salon. And Howard has stayed true to that name. One day a month, Howard provides free services such as haircuts, facials, and manicures to homeless women and young girls living in poverty throughout the Tampa area. CBS News reported that approximately 300 girls from area shelters have benefited from Howard’s free services.

“I believe everything we go through we go through for a purpose. I truly believe that nothing happens by coincidence,” Howard told CBS News. “I would encourage other broken women, business owners — all of us have a story and I believe that we should use what we’ve been through to help others.”

In preparation of the 2017-2018 school year, Howard threw a “Back to School Princess Party” in which



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homeless girls from five to 11 were invited to the salon for five hours of pampering.

“We want them to feel like a princess for a day. It’s important, especially during their transition,” Howard said. “I want them to be confident because if they’re confident they excel.”

Beyond the Call of Duty

When Kristin Villaneuva’s college fund was stolen from her family home, there was no way she could have predicted the outpouring of support she would receive from her local police and community.

Villaneuva was on vacation with her family in early August when a burglar reportedly broke in to the family’s house in El Segundo, California, and stole her \$2,000 college fund. Villaneuva had earned that money tutoring her peers over the course of four years and had earmarked it for college.

According to CBSLA.com, Villaneuva was a high-school valedictorian and is attending Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, where she is studying materials engineering.

When the El Segundo Police Department learned what was stolen from the Villaneuva home, they immediately took action. They joined with the El Segundo Police Officers’ Association to start a crowdfunding campaign to help replenish the stolen funds. “Kristin has done everything right in her life and was a major contributor to this community,” wrote the officers on the GoFundMe page. “Let’s not allow some burglars [to] ruin her college experience!!!”

Within just nine days, the page surpassed its goal, having raised \$5,000. The police officers then presented Villaneuva with a check.

Villaneuva and her family were touched by the officers’ actions and the kindness of the GoFundMe community. “I feel very privileged and fortunate to be able to go to school and I think it justifies the idea that hard work does pay off,” she said.

And the police officers were impressed by the outpouring of support from the community. “The support from the El Segundo community was incredible,” said Police Officer Joe Cameron, union president. “From El Segundo employees to El Segundo residents, everyone pitched in. Community support like this is why I’m proud to be the president of this association and serve this amazing community.”

Hear Ye, Hear Ye

When 10-year-old Braden Baker’s hearing aid was destroyed by his dog, he learned it would cost more than \$3,000 to replace it and that the cost was not typically covered by insurance. Baker has worn hearing aids since he was a baby. And while he was fortunate enough to have a family who could cover the cost, he decided that he wanted to do something for those who did not have the means to pay.

“I was like, ‘How could I give back,’ you know?” Braden, who hails from Fort Worth, Texas, recalled. “So, I told my mom about GoFundMe and we started a GoFundMe page!”

People.com reported that within two months, he surpassed his goal, raising a total of \$15,000, which he donated to the Oticon Hearing Foundation.

According to Braden’s mother, Ashley, Braden does not intend to stop raising money. He intends to continue to assist low-income families so that they can provide hearing aids for their children.

— Raven Clabough



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