



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 18, 2017

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The Goodness of America

In Honor of Thanksgiving: TJ's Turkeys

Teen TJ Tracy of Saratoga Springs, New York, started his own charity at the age of nine, and nine years later, it has blossomed under his stewardship.

When Tracy was just nine years old, he enlisted the help of his family and friends to assemble Thanksgiving baskets for the less-fortunate members of his Saratoga Springs community.

Tracy's GoFundMe page tells the story of his charity's origins:

In 2009, when I was 9 years old, my mom and I were talking about what we could do together as a family during Thanksgiving. I remember her explaining to me that one of our options was to "help families that don't have much and might need help" and that we could do something to help them. I felt completely shocked and sad that there were families in our own community who didn't have the means to celebrate a Thanksgiving dinner with their loved ones. I knew I had to do something.

In the first year of his charity, he raised \$200, which helped to feed many needy members of his community. Nine years later, the charity has grown into something bigger than he could have ever predicted. According to TJ, he has raised a total of \$50,000 since its inception. Last year alone, he managed to raise \$17,000 to create Thanksgiving baskets.

According to TJ's mother, Beverly, his efforts are time-consuming, but he uses his lunch period at school to get a lot of his work done. For all of Tracy's hard work, WNYT reported that the high-school junior has been recognized as a "national kid hero" by crowdfunding site GoFundMe.

And while Tracy is honored by the recognition, it's clearly not his motivation. Instead, he takes pleasure in doing something good for others and inspiring other young people to do the same. "It's just incredible how we've been able to get the community involved and get kids involved. That's a big part of TJs Turkeys — giving the kids opportunities to give back and make a difference in their community," he said.

If These Children Are Our Future, It May Be Bright Yet

Children can often be the perfect examples of the type of people we should strive to be. Three-year-old Cohen Chastain and four-year-old Sidney Fahrenbruch prove to be just such examples with their surprisingly mature acts of kindness.

Cohen Chastain of Rockmart, Georgia, decided on his own that the best way to honor the local police force's first-ever fallen officer was to stand and salute each passing officer for two hours during the officer's October 3 funeral procession.

Polk County Detective Kristen Hearne was shot and killed while investigating a stolen vehicle, and though Cohen had never met her, he knew he wanted to pay his respects. "It was all his idea" Cohen's mother, Mindy, told *Today*. "He had a lot of questions with all the police officers at church that day and I decided I should just tell him the truth. He was really heartbroken when I explained what had happened and he wanted to wear a police uniform and stand for the procession."

Cohen donned a police officer's uniform, which appears to be an old Halloween costume, and stood for



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more than two hours, quite a long time for a toddler to remain in the same position. “He’s just a regular 3-year-old little boy with a love for law enforcement,” Mindy said of Cohen. “We can hardly get him to stand in one spot for 60 seconds, much less two hours.”

Police officers at the Floyd County Sheriff’s Office, where Detective Hearne launched her career, were so touched by Cohen’s display that they wanted to honor him as well. They chipped in and bought him his very own battery-powered squad car, LittleThings.com reported.

And while many have recognized Cohen for his beautiful deed, he does not believe that he did anything extraordinary, which arguably makes it even better. “When I tell him that people are talking about what he did, he just smiles. He doesn’t feel like he’s done anything really major,” his mother told *Today*.

Sidney Fahrenbruch, of Colorado, also did something extraordinary for a local police officer. When she learned that Officer Kyle Zulauf of the Longmont Police Department had cancer, she immediately opened her piggy bank, donating its approximately eight dollars. When asked why she made that sacrifice, her response was simple: “It’s the nice thing to do.”

Officer Zulauf was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer more than a year ago, *Today* reported, and his department has been raising money to help him pay for another surgery.

Fahrenbruch’s name may sound familiar. We recently reported in this column that she had befriended another officer from the same department, David Bonday, who was kind enough to visit her family’s new house to check for monsters.

According to Sidney’s mother, Megan, she has a great deal of reverence for the police and often brings them goodies and treats. “It all started about two years ago when she saw an officer directing traffic. It was hot outside and she said, ‘He looks thirsty; he needs water,’ and she brought him a bottle of water,” Fahrenbruch told *Today*.

It was during one of Sidney’s regular visits to the police station that she noticed the poster for the fundraiser to raise money for Zulauf’s surgery. She immediately turned to her mother and said she wanted to donate the contents of her piggy bank, as well as a half Ziploc bag of change that she has managed to save. She had been saving money for a toy, but thought nothing of giving her savings to Zulauf instead.

Her good deed did not go unnoticed. Her mother is understandably proud of Sidney’s unflinching generosity, and Longmont’s Department of Public Safety honored her good deed in a Facebook post on October 24. “Today, Sidney was back at the department with a different purpose. She brought the contents of her piggy bank ... to provide to our fundraiser for one of our officers who has been diagnosed with cancer. Words are not available for what this means to us.”

—Raven Clabough



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