



Goodness of America

Breakfast With Hundreds of Stand-in Dads

When Billy Earl Dade Middle School in Dallas, Texas, asked for male mentors to attend a “Breakfast With Dads” event to stand in for absent fathers, the school could not have predicted the turnout.

The *Washington Post* reported that the school has a population of approximately 900 students, of which 90 percent qualify as low-income. When the school announced it would be hosting a “Breakfast With Dads” event, only 150 male students between ages 11 and 13 signed up. School officials were concerned that the low participation was because many of the young men did not have a father figure available to attend the event. They also feared that some of the attending students would not have a male figure at their side, so they requested volunteers to stand in as mentors.

Children’s advocate Kristina Chäädé Dove — who has served on what is called a site-based decision-making team for the middle school — published a call to action on social media in early December.

The organizers had hoped for 50 or so volunteers, but on the day of the event, nearly 600 men showed up to mentor the boys.

The impressive turnout forced the school to move the event from the cafeteria to the gymnasium.

The event’s icebreaker involved teaching the young men to tie a tie.

Stephanie Drenka, a Dallas photographer and blogger who works with Dove, wrote of the event:

I will never forget witnessing the young students surrounded by supportive community members. There were so many volunteers, that at times I saw young men huddled in the center of 4-5 mentors. The look of awe — even disbelief — in students’ eyes as they made their way through the crowd of “Dads” was astonishing.

According to event organizer Reverend Donald Parish, Jr., pastor of True Lee Missionary Baptist Church, mentors such as the event’s volunteers play a significant role in the lives of the young men.

“When a young person sees someone other than their teacher take interest in them, it inspires them. That’s what we want to see happen,” Parish told the *Dallas Morning News*.

Road Trip!

In early January, the Malenfant family was headed back to their home in Portland, Maine, from New York, where their son, Kori, had undergone brain surgery days earlier. They missed their connecting train in Boston by five minutes and would have had to wait for hours in single-digit weather were it not for Boston Police Captain Kelley McCormick.

“We were just setting up to do the Boston Garden detail for the Bruins game,” Captain McCormick said. “They looked tired. [Kori] looked cold and frail.”

According to WMTW Portland, McCormick sympathized with the family, as his wife had previously dealt with a difficult post-op recovery after undergoing kidney transplant surgery. The donor? Captain McCormick.

He invited the family to sit in his warm car for a while, as he had to get gas anyway. But, as WMTW



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Portland reported, McCormick kept driving north after getting gas rather than returning to the train station.

Mrs. Malenfant asked McCormick in disbelief, "Are you driving us to Portland?" Captain McCormick responded, "Yes, this is a kidnapping, but it's legal."

The family's response was quite emotional, McCormick recalled. "They burst into tears and that was very emotional. They were just very tired, I could see it, and I just felt like they're going to sit in North Station all night no matter what."

According to Kori's mother, Wendi, the entire experience was "surreal." Two hours and over 100 miles later, the family was home. "There were just no words at that point," Malenfant said. "We were so thankful."

But to Captain McCormick, it was just another day on the job. "Every officer wants to do that every day," McCormick told Boston25 News.

Need a Kidney? Take Mine

Robert Leibowitz, a 60-year-old single father of five children from New Jersey, was in need of a kidney after suffering with chronic kidney disease for three years. In desperation, during a visit to Disney World in September he wore a shirt that read, "In need of kidney O Positive Call 917-597-2651." Thankfully, a stranger stepped forward to be Leibowitz's hero.

Leibowitz was spotted by Rocio Sandoval, who happened to be visiting Disney World in September when Leibowitz was in attendance and snapped a photo of the shirt to post on Facebook. The photo went viral, shared more than 90,000 times, eventually catching the eye of a complete stranger named Richie Sully, of Indiana, months after the photo was posted.

Sully told InsideEdition.com that he reached out to Leibowitz with a simple message: "My name is Richie. I am O positive. I have an extra kidney and you are welcome to it."

The two men immediately began the testing process to confirm that Sully was indeed a match. Sully flew from Indiana to visit Leibowitz and complete his testing. The two bonded as Leibowitz gave Sully a tour of New York. The surgery took place on January 18, and Sully was proud to be the reason Leibowitz would not have to undergo dialysis anymore.

"It's not a big deal to me," Sully said. "A guy needs this to live, and I have an extra one, I can function with one, not a big deal."

And Leibowitz is moved that a complete stranger would be willing to do something so dramatic for him. "I can't even put into words the type of gesture, [that] someone would do something like that," Leibowitz said.

Sully acknowledged that were it not for all the good people who shared Leibowitz's post, Leibowitz could still be waiting for a kidney. "I wanted to take a moment and thank everyone that shared this post," he wrote. "Had it not been for you guys, I never would have seen it and Rob would still be looking for a match. His kids can now go to bed and not have to worry about their dad. Thank you for helping me give them more time as a family."

— Raven Clabough



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