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Marvel versus DC is arguably the most complex rivalry in the entertainment industry. The youth of our nation watch these superheroes and envision that a hero must come in the form of a cape and possess laser eye vision. Ordinary people are not seen as being hero material. I may not walk around in a suit, or save a young girl's beloved cat from a tree, but on one special day I became a hero, just as easily as anybody can and my heroic act changed me forever.

I hold a place in my heart for all types of people; however the group that is especially appealing to me are children who endure mental and physical disabilities. From the age of seven when I was thrown into a soccer program assisting the special needs kids; or from the age of four when I first started playing board games and painting with my uncle who has Down Syndrome, it has always been in my blood to help others. I came to realize early on that I could easily relate to them and that we were actually quite similar. I have participated in many events, clubs and organizations all revolving around inclusion and assisting children with mental challenges. This is nothing unusual as I am more than aware that there are thousands of students who also participate in these activities.

Wanting to challenge myself to do more- to go that extra mile- I began to consider what more I could do. I decided that I was going to enrich the lives of the special needs kids in my school. So, working with the athletic trainer at my school, I gathered up all of the special needs kids with the help of my athletic trainer and brought them to the gym. The first thing I did was explain to them that they had been chosen for the basketball team. Their joyful and proud expressions are something I will always remember. We practiced two times a week leading up to game day. Each practice, the kids became more skilled and more excited for the big game. And then, the day came.



Forest green jerseys with bright gold letters were laid out on the bleachers. As every student grabbed their jersey and put it on, something dawned on me. Playing two varsity sports, I had never seen putting the jersey on as a big deal. Nobody does. During the game, I played with the team, assisting them and making sure that everyone had the chance to score a basket and have the crowd "go wild" for them. At the end of the game, one of the students came up to me, and his words are solely responsible for my coming of age. He looked into my eyes and said, "I finally feel like a normal kid."

You versus me, the real hero rivalry. As I have matured, the knowledge that there are not heroes flying in the sky has been replaced with the conviction that genuine heroes do exist. They might be found in your local grocery store and even the old grouchy neighbor you despise. Normal people have the power to be heroes, and the day that I made these kids feel as if they were just the same as everyone else, I became one of my own. There is now nothing that I take for granted, and every day I wake up with a new sense of humility. For me, this experience was an epiphany, as I now know that true heroes can be born of small acts of kindness.

Doing what comes naturally, making time, and giving yourself may not be viewed as heroic, but I believe it is. When something that cost me so little- only time and kindness- provides others with a sense of accomplishment, pleasure and unbridled joy, I feel so uplifted that I think I can fly.

To me, giving back to your community is the only way to feel true pleasure. If it were not for me being able to have this impact on these students and the community around them, I would have never learned the true purpose of life. It is not about what you do for yourself, it is about what you do for others and how you can make others feel. In addition to this one specific event I try to help out my community in many ways. I am a part of the Leo Club and the Honor Society which are both based solely on community service and doing events that will help people around us. Through events such as the food pantry and cards for the military it is all about giving back and helping people who may not be as fortunate. Without volunteers and community service our world would not be able to function.