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Reaction Paper

“Happiness”

"Happiness is felt by making other people happy." When I heard this, I began to question what in life determines my happiness and if I believed this quote to be true, was I happy? September 10, 2011 was a back to school charity event that my church, Refuge of Hope, was having. We had about 100 grocery bags, book bags, school supplies, and trays of hot food to hand out to children and parents that lived in a very poor are in New Rochelle, NY.

Many of the adults and the youth from my church went to help in handing out the bags, one thing that I noticed was the passion that the adults in my church had in helping these fellow parents and children. I also noticed the attitude the youth had in helping, most of them were sitting in the cars, listening to music, and watching the adults do most of the work. I myself was very tired from being out in the sun all day but I managed to gather some strength and help in what I could.

It was heartwarming to see all the children’s smiles and excitement when they would come and pick up new book bags filled with school supplies for the new school year. All of the parents were extremely appreciative of the grocery bags, the warm food, and of course the book bags for their kids. It really made me realize how many people possibly in our county or neighborhoods are simply struggling to bring home a bag of groceries to feed their families, which is something that many of us take for granted.

As all this was happening I was engulfed with so many emotions, and I was extremely grateful for all that I have. All this had stirred up in me emotions that I have never felt before. I was filled with compassion and empathy at the sight of all the people that needed our help. But nothing impacted me more than a man that came with his daughter to me for a plate of warm food, as he turned to walk away he said to me “ Thank You so much, this is the only meal we have had today.” When I heard him utter those words, it broke my spirit. I looked at him, and with a knot in my throat, I said “Your welcome, God Bless You”.

As the event was coming to an end, and we were packing everything up to go home, I thought about the quote that I once heard. It wasn’t until then that I truly understood that happiness doesn’t come from the tangible things in my life that only cause momentary happiness, but that it comes intangible gestures of kindness that mark the lives of others.