

Christmas is for LOVE

The author of the following story is unknown, but it has a very meaningful lesson from a child. We, as adults, sometimes overlook the sensitivity of children. As Kiwanians, we have the opportunity to fulfill this message as we “serve the children of the world!”

Christmas is for love! It is for joy, for giving and sharing. For laughter, for reuniting with family and friends, for tinsel and brightly decorated packages, but mostly, Christmas is for LOVE. I had not believed this until a small, elf-like student with wide-eyed innocent eyes and soft rosy cheeks gave me a wondrous gift one Christmas.

Mark was an 11 year old orphan who lived with his aunt, a bitter middle-aged woman greatly annoyed with the burden of caring for her deceased sister's son. She never failed to remind young Mark that if it hadn't been for her generosity, he would be a vagrant, a homeless waif. Still, with all the scolding and chilliness at home, he was a sweet and gentle child.

I had not noticed Mark particularly until he began staying after class each day to help me straighten up the room. We did this quietly and comfortably, not speaking much, but enjoying the solitude of that hour of the day. When we did talk, Mark spoke of his mother. Though he was quite small when she died, he remembered a kind, gentle, loving woman who always spent much time with him. As Christmas drew near, however, Mark failed to stay after school each day. I looked forward to his coming and when the days passed and he continued to scamper hurriedly from the room after class, I was curious. I stopped him one afternoon and asked why he no longer helped me in my room. I told him how I missed him and his large blue eyes lit up eagerly as he replied, “Did you really miss me?” I explained how he had been my best helper. “I was making you a surprise,” he whispered confidentially. “It's for Christmas.” With that, he became embarrassed and dashed from the room. He didn't stay after school any more after that.

Finally came the last day before Christmas. Mark crept slowly into the room late that afternoon with his hands concealing something behind his back. “I have our present,” he said timidly when I looked up. “I hope you like it.” He held out his hands, and there lying on his small palms was a tiny wooden box. “Is there something in it, I asked as I opened the top to look inside.” “Oh, you can't see what's in it,” he replied, and you can't touch or taste it or feel it, but mother always said it makes you feel good all the time, warm on cold nights, and safe when you're all alone.” I gazed into the empty box. “What is it, Mark, that will make me feel so good.” “It is LOVE,” he whispered softly, “And mother always said Love is best when you give it away.” He turned and quietly left the room.

So now I keep a small box, crudely made of scraps of wood, on the piano in my living room and only smile as inquiring friends raise quizzical eyebrows when I explain to them that there is LOVE in it. Yes, Christmas is for gaiety, mirth and song, for good and wondrous gifts. But mostly, Christmas is for LOVE. Give the greatest gift of all this Christmas, give LOVE!

Have a Merry & Blessed Christmas!
Tom Cameron