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Smart Choices for the Game of Life



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Sarosha (top row, red dress) poses with the friends who came to her birthday party. Instead of regular presents, these girls brought a total of \$400 for Sarosha's charity.

Sarosha Hansraj: The Gift of Giving

by Jessica Dye

Did you know that there are children who can't go to school? In other countries kids often have to work on farms to help their families instead of going to school. Sometimes they work so hard that their shoes wear out!

When Sarosha Hansraj heard that, she knew that she wanted to help.

"Learning is important," she says. "People can take away your house. They can take away your money, property, or clothes. But nobody can ever take away your

education. It's the only way out of poverty!"

Sarosha talked to her parents about setting up her own charity. The hardest part was figuring out how to get money to the kids who need it. Her father found a group called PECA to help with

that. PECA stands for Partnership for the Education of Children in Afghanistan.

Through PECA, Sarosha learned about Khost, Afghanistan. More than 80 percent of men and 97 percent of women living there can't read. The girls' school in Khost has no drinking water. There's no library, and no furniture in the office. For the 500 schoolgirls, there are no books, no visual aids, and no sports equipment.

Sarosha named her charity Children Care for Children. It now gives school supplies to the Darnami Girls' School in Khost.

As money is raised, the students get a pair of school shoes and six pairs of socks. They also receive a school bag containing notebooks, pencils, colored pencils, an eraser, and a ruler. So far 484 girls have gotten supplies!

Sarosha's Web site accepts donations, but she raises a lot of money herself. She set up a basketball fund-raiser called Hoop-A-Thon. It made more than \$2,200 for the school!

This year Sarosha even gave her tenth birthday party gifts to the Darnami Girls' School. "In the invitations, I wrote a note to my friends. I told them that I have everything I need. So instead of buying presents, I asked them to give money to the Darnami Girls' School," Sarosha says.

Her party was fun and brought in \$400! Now two of her friends have also decided to donate their birthday money.

Sarosha spends a lot of time talking to other kids about volunteering. "There is a lot that kids can do!" she says. "That's why I named my charity Children Care for Children. It's important for children to help other kids in need. Everybody can make a dif-

ference, no matter how old or young they are."

So what does the future hold for Sarosha? She'll continue to help people. Staying drug-free is a big part of her plan. She knows that you can't help others if you're destroying your body and mind!

"Doing drugs, smoking, and drinking alcohol aren't smart," she says. "They can really damage you! And those things don't hurt just you—they hurt other people, too."

Sarosha thinks that it's important for everyone to help others. "You don't have to have a lot of money," she says. "Even one dollar makes a difference."

Giving your time can make a difference, too. There are lots of ways to volunteer right where you are. Here are some ways that *you* can help:

- Walk a dog or play with a cat. Animal shelters often need people to care for the animals while they wait for new homes.
- Hang out with someone's grandma. Elderly people in nursing homes get lonely. You can brighten someone's day by making a craft for them or talking with them.
- Help hungry people in your community. Collect cans for a food pantry or help with a local food drive.
- Give up presents—dedicate your next birthday party to a good cause! Ask your friends to donate instead of buying gifts for you.

Helping others is a great way to spend your time. It's also good for you. As Sarosha says, "Giving brings joy to everyone—it makes the giver happy, too!"

Find out more about Sarosha Hansraj and her charity, Children Care for Children, by going to www.childrencareforchildren.org.

Questions

- 1 Sarosha says that education is the only way out of poverty. Do you agree with her? Why?

- 2 Setting up a charity seems like a hard thing for a kid to do. But with help from her parents Sarosha found a way to make it happen. Who can help **you** accomplish difficult things? What have they helped you do?

- 3 When Sarosha heard about children in the world who can't go to school, she knew that she wanted to help. What stories have **you** heard that make you want to help someone?

Activity

Make a list of things that you're good at. How can you use your talents to help others in your community?