

a little Christmas giving

Angels helping angels

by junior Brooke Busch

Almost everyone is afraid of taking risks- afraid of the unknown... afraid of what could happen.

Derek Kimball knows this fear well, but he knew the risk was worth taking if it meant changing someone's life.

Kimball, formerly a math teacher at Hudson High School, decided to leave his eight-year teaching career to pursue a new path.

Kimball and his wife Kristen adopted three kids, two from Uganda and one from Black Hawk County, beginning in 2012.

They experienced, first-hand, the struggles and hardships of adoption. Their adoption process brought them closer to both foster families and other adoptive families who were experiencing similar struggles.

Being so impacted by the little angels that came into his life, Kimball left teaching to start a non-profit organization called Cedar Valley An-

gels. This organization helps foster families and kids feel supported.

One of the ways this organization supports these families is through the Love Box Program. Volunteers provide a family with a box of items that they may need like pantry items, pajamas, or diapers. The box can also include things that the family may desire like coloring books or arts and crafts projects.

Another way this organization helps kids is by giving a child an angel (volunteer) to support them. This could be: going to their sports games, band or choir concerts, or simply being there for them in a time of need.

Kimball began this program because he knew that if he and his wife were having difficulties, other families had to be as well.

In 2017, when he was personally struggling with the challenges he was facing as an adoptive father, he reached out to the parent organization Austin Angels, based in Austin, Texas. Once they learned

that Kimball and others in the Midwest needed help, they asked him to start an organization, but the timing wasn't right.

"I said no way, there was just no way that it could work," said Kimball, who is the parent of three kids ages 4-10. In addition, he was about to start fostering kids 5 years old and under, and he worked two jobs as a high school math teacher and a college minister.

But with some encouragement from friends and family, the idea began to grow, and Kimball began to change his mind.

"People started to encourage it and were telling me that they wanted to write a check, be on the board, or be a Love Box leader. That's when I knew that I had to do it," said Kimball.

Leaving teaching and risking everything to pursue a completely different career path was a hard decision for Kimball, but he knew he had to.

Said Kimball, "It's one of those things that if I hadn't done it, I always would have wondered and regretted not doing it."

Soon the fear of the unknown was replaced with pure happiness. Said Kimball, "There is a joy that comes along with being generous with your time or money."



photo courtesy of Megan Widner
Kimball works at an event for his non-profit, Cedar Valley Angels.

A humble mission: Junior to help in Haiti

by senior Payton Sherwood

In the month of December, most people look forward to the things they will receive, but sophomore Alexis Schares is only thinking about what she can give.

Schares will be the only high school student on a five-member team with Imagine Missions that will travel to Haiti.

According to the organization's website, imaginemissions.org, this non-profit organization hopes to change lives and bring hope by creating a home for children to learn, play, and grow closer to Christ. They do this by creating orphanages, schools, and professional trade programs for people of all ages in Haiti.

With prior volunteer experience at NHS blood drives and the local food bank, Schares felt as though she had to do more.

"It's not like donating a can of food, it's bigger than myself," said Schares. "You'll forget you donated a can of food the week after you do it, I'll remember Haiti for the rest of my life."

Doing Well + Helping Far

by juniors Lexi Bergmeier and Grace Schwenneker

Hudson parent Katie Farwell is a small business owner who designs and creates clothing to help families that are wanting to adopt.

She hand-makes all of her products out of her home. All the money that is made is donated to adopting families to help with expenses. As a result, 40 families have been helped just from the business.

Farwell sells clothes for children and adults along with decorative signs, all of which can be purchased in her Etsy store.



photo courtesy of etsy.com
Katie Farwell shows her pieces to an interested customer.

With airfare and lodging alone, Schares' team has to raise \$1,200. But she refuses to let the expense deter her.

"This is something we want to do," said Schares.

To help with these expenses, her group created t-shirts which raised over \$300. Schares's family also hosted a dog wash fundraiser for the group at their store, Pet Supplies Plus.

On Dec. 12, Schares and her team drove to Chicago where they boarded a plane the following day. During her nine-day stay in Haiti, she'll be working at a nearby orphanage building soccer goals for the kids.

After that time, Schares will return to the states with the best gift of all.

"Even though my group is doing something really amazing for these kids," said Schares. "I know that they'll do more for me than I could ever do for them."



photo courtesy of Madi Davis
Hudson graduates, Madi Davis and Harley McHone, visited Haiti during 2016. They will also be joining Schares in traveling.

"There are people in this world who have less than me, and they still find ways to enjoy life."

"These kids will be kicking around a bottle on the ground, and still be so happy and content with what they have."

"I'll remember going to Haiti for the rest of my life. The equipment that we're building, and the buildings that we're painting will be there for years."

Giving a little extra



NHS joins the American Red Cross in donating blood. During the September 18th blood drive, a total of 35 units of blood were collected and donated. NHS also hosts blood drives in the summer.



Girls Basketball Team will be ringing the kettle bells for the Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign on December 15th. All the money raised will be donated to the Salvation Army.



Student Council will continue to hold the annual Chuck-a-Duck at basketball games to raise money for Adopt-a-Family. They will also be hosting a Valentines Day Bunch for senior citizens.

photos by juniors Lexi Bergmeier, Brooke Busch, and Grace Schwenneker

The above HHS organizations will be participating in Adopt-a-Family. Each will purchase presents to donate to local families in need.

Giving it back

by junior Grace Schwenneker

Giving back. Words that everyone loves to hear. Why? Because who doesn't love the feeling of making someone's day and putting a smile on their face?

One of the most important things is to help others when they can't help themselves, especially around Christmas. According to lifestyle blogger, AnneMarie John, consumers spent \$630.7 billion during the 2015 winter holiday season.

Now, personally, I think spending hundreds of dollars for a holiday is just excessive. After all, the holidays shouldn't be about showering those you love in lavish

gifts. It should be about helping others and giving them what we all need: appreciation.

Appreciation can range from a toy to a handwritten letter. Anything helps. It might only cost a few dollars or nothing at all.

It's all about doing something that will change another person's life by simply showing that you value them. A small token for someone can change their perspective, not only on life but on helping others too.

Not everyone can afford to or has the means to provide for their family during the holidays. That's where you and I come in.

It just takes a little effort, and it's definitely not something that you need to do alone. Go ask your parents, your best friends, anyone!

You can give your time as easily as a present through organizations like Adopt-A-Family or the Salvation Army.

Realize, giving a little gift can make a big difference in the lives of those who feel forgotten. You've been given a lot in life. Isn't it time to give back?



LEGO Classic Creativity Box at Target



Cat and Jack Cozy Socks at Target