

A YCA Happy Story

I would like to share a story that brought a tear to my eye and melted my heart.

One of the mid-school students in our Youth ~ Connections ~ Academics (YCA) Program shared with me a very private moment. His household includes him, his siblings, his mother, and his father. He went on to say that he and his siblings don't exchange birthday or Christmas gifts very often - not because his parents don't want to, it's just that they can't afford extra expenses like these.

The student said he understands that his parents work hard so the family has a place to live and food to eat; so he never complains about not getting birthday or Christmas gifts. He explained he knew the pandemic made things a lot harder for his mom and dad, adding a lot more stress to their day-to-day family life. It struck me that he had such grown up understanding at such a young age.

His family, like many others, dealt with another setback when his parents' work hours were reduced. The boy said he couldn't remember the last time his family had a real Christmas tree in their house during the holidays and figured this year would be no different. Yet another Christmas with no tree and no presents.

Until Youth Crossroads changed all that.

This boy and his family heard about a few of YC's community holiday giveaways. The events they attended -- our Christmas tree and turkey giveaway AND the gift giveaway, which continued throughout January - put smiles on everyone's faces. This boy stated with delight that thanks to YC, his whole family was able to celebrate Christmas with presents under their very own tree for the first time in years. His family was really impressed with the quality of the gifts too. He told me he didn't think the gifts would be so cool! It definitely brightened their spirits during a really tough time in their lives.

This student participates in our YCA program almost every single day, and his family attends every event we host. They are very grateful for us, and I think I speak for the rest of my team when I say we are very grateful for them and all of our families who participate at Youth Crossroads.

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(We're also so thankful for all the community partners who worked closely with us to make these giveaways possible. As the saying goes, "It takes a village.")