

xpRemo C. Bertugli Memorial Award Essay

Contestant #5

Ever since I was a little girl, I loved having a crown put on my head. I loved to feel special like a princess and a crown helped to do just that. Not only did it make me feel pretty, but it gave me a sense of confidence in myself. This one object made me feel so great that I felt like I could take on the world. As I grew older, I started wanting to help others feel this feeling. I wanted to help young kids that were struggling to find the beauty in themselves.

In 2015, a close family friend told me about an organization that she had put together. This non-profit organization called "Crowns of Love" would take past queens from her pageant to Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh to visit the children that are chronically ill. They would then distribute goody boxes to each one of them and then crown them individually as Lawrenceville's Queens/Kings of the Day. As I started to learn more about this, I became very interested in helping out. I asked her if I could come along to support and she said that she would greatly appreciate it. I got to meet so many wonderful kids and hear all of their stories. Although many of them were very shy, they were so excited and appreciative of what was given to them. Some of the children were too ill to speak for themselves, but their parents told us that they really did appreciate what we were doing.

After giving them their gifts, we all got to sit together and make crafts. We got to make friendship bracelets and color pictures together as well as play some of the board games that they had set up in the children's play center. Later on in the day, Tinkerbell, Elsa and Ana made appearances. All of the kids' faces lit up with excitement and we all

got to take pictures together. As the day came to an end, we said our goodbyes and thanked them for letting us visit. We all left the building knowing that we made them feel good about themselves. There wasn't a moment that they were sad while we visited. We helped them to feel beautiful and special.

When I look back on this day and remember these amazing children, I see the struggles and challenges that they were facing, but I also see how wonderful and special they felt with smiles on their faces and crowns on their heads. Their hands waving goodbye as they said thank you. I can see a little bit of me in every one of them. I can see why Mr. Bertugli dedicated himself to working with the youth in our community. He created a very special bond with each and every one of them. I aspire to be like him because he was very wise and understood the true gift of giving.