

SHAWN ZUBEK is a seventh grader at St. Mary Byzantine School in Cleveland. He has been on the honor roll for the past four years and takes advanced placement math.

He loves playing sports, cooking, and making clay sculptures. His goals are to be either an artist or a chef.

Have you ever walked around downtown? The usual sight is business people going to or from work and a lot of cars. If you look very closely though, you just might spot a homeless man or woman trying to survive.

On a beautiful summer afternoon, my family and I took a trip downtown to do some sightseeing. We had planned to go down to the lake and then to get something to eat. While we were walking towards the fast food restaurant I saw a homeless man, about 20 or 25 years of age, sitting outside of the restaurant. He was filthy and you could smell him from 15 feet away. His old and raggedy clothes hanging from his poorly nourished body didn't help him look any better.

As most homeless people do, he was asking for alms. While sitting there with his hand extended out for money, he was given everything but that. One man found it appropriate to use him as an ashtray, another man walked past him, laughing and pointing at him while mumbling nasty and hurtful words. The homeless man hung his head in shame. The majority of people just walked past him almost like they were trying to go out of their way not to look at him so he couldn't bother them.

Before we entered the building, my mother handed the homeless man a five dollar bill. The smile on his face made me smile. We entered the restaurant and ate our lunch. While we were inside, my dad bought two extra meals and drinks. I was pondering who they were for because everyone in my family had already eaten. As we walked out of the front door, my dad handed me the bag of food and he told me to give it to the homeless man. I walked over and handed him the bag. He smiled and said "Thank you very much!" As I walked away I knew I had done the right thing. The smile on his face made the rest of my day even more enjoyable.

This experience has really opened my eyes to see the real world. That whatever you get, you should be grateful for because many don't have anything. I preach this to my friends and family. In the near future I'm striving to have more food drives not only in my school, but also in my community. My parish, St. Augustine, has multiple food drives throughout the year. They also serve meals to the homeless every day. They have taught me to be kind and help serve others. I will try to make groups that go out and help homeless people, not only with day to day living, but also to help boost their self-esteem. To get them up and moving to get a job. I hope that this plan, my plan, will STOP THE HATE between the ones who have and those who don't have.