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Community Service Work

### Helping Those in Need

Growing up in the *Segundo Barrio* wasn't the easiest thing to do, every night was something different, from hearing gun shots to seeing people steal from others, and police chasing those who wanted to be a bad influence. I remember my dad telling me every night "don't worry son, I'm going to get you out of here, I want the best for you" hearing those words always kept me away from becoming one of those who was always causing trouble. I used to think to myself "why cause trouble when my father is trying to give me better". Going into middle school my dad got with my step mom and that was a big boost with the financial issues that my dad was having, he was a single parent, working, and taking care of me. When him and my step mom got together, they both changed their lives around and got better jobs.

Furthermore, they bought a house to move us out of the "worst" part of the city and had jobs that were keeping us financially stable. My dad grew up learning to always give back to where you come and he tried preaching that to me as well, he said "always stay humble and give back to where you came from." When I got to seventh grade, he began his own toy run during Christmas, he collected over 200 toys and went back to "Barrio Park" to give them out to little kids in that area. The next year he had more time to get prepared, he was promoting it, asking people to donate toys and it worked. He collected over 500 toys that year and I went with him to help give them out. Ever since I have been a part of the "1<sup>st</sup> String Philly Fan Club Toy Run", I

have been volunteering every Christmas Eve for the past five years, giving out toys and also serving to the kids in the community. As many may know, *Segundo Barrio* is also a very low-income community in which most have to live by the day. Not knowing if they will have enough to eat the next day or most of them do not have money to go buy clothes, toys, or any other ordinary stuff. Which is the reason why my dad chose that particular area, he thought they could really benefit from a toy run.

My job is to collect a certain number of toys, to help pass them out, and I also serve them slices of pizza and give them drinks. Doing this really brightens up my Christmas, seeing kids with smiles because they are receiving something that their parents might not be able to is priceless. I love volunteering and giving up some of my time to bring joy to a kid, I grew up under the same circumstances, I always remember to thank God for allowing my family to do great things.