

Umer Khalil  
Grade: 7th  
Teacher: Mrs. Currie  
School: Central Academy  
ESP: Global Educational Excellence  
Authorizer: Central Michigan University

### Small Things Can go a Long Way

Someone had once said, “I realized if you can change a classroom, you can change a community, and if you can change communities you can change the world,” that is where my story begins. It was a gloomy day, not too long ago when I was sitting in class and reading an article on Malala Yousafzai, a young female from Pakistan, who changed the real image of girls having the opportunity to be educated. Malala Yousafzai has become world-wide inspirational figure for girls and everyone else who could not get the education that they deserved. Being a young male myself, and coming from a Pakistani family, there was a lot to realize about myself and who I am. After reading this article, I felt as if I needed to do something, take an action, and even if that meant helping someone in my family get the education that they could not afford.

Being born in America, I have the opportunity to be educated and become what I have envisioned for my future. Since I was a kid my dream was to become a lawyer one day. My parents have been very supportive and are helping me reach my goal.

I am very lucky to be born in a country that has education system for everyone and provides all the resources needed to reach your career by eliminating gender, bias, race, discrimination and other factors that could prevent someone from getting an education.

I am also very fortunate enough to have a family that is financially stable and able to afford many things that many of my relatives can't afford, and one perception is education.

In Pakistan, I have close relatives who were unfortunately not financially stable and struggled a lot within their own home. Do to some unfortunate events, his family had to cut down some expenses and sadly one of them was his education. As heartbreaking as it was, I could not bear enough to hear this news when he told me that he will no longer be going to school anymore. This young person was my best friend since we were very small, and everytime I went to Pakistan to visit him I saw the passion that he had for going to school. And that is when I knew that I had to do something.

Even though I was still young, in school. I decided that I was going to help my friend get the education that he justifies for, anyway possible. With the support of my family I saved my allowance by doing small chores around the house. I may still be young to do something big, but that didn't stop me from helping someone succeed in their life.

After saving little by little, believe it or not, from a single penny to twenty dollar bills I was able to save up enough to where my friend could afford another year of education. Luckily, my uncle was taking a trip back to Pakistan to visit his family, and that is when I decided to give my savings to my uncle so he could give all that money to my best friend, who was losing his most important priority.

Shortly, I talked to my friend on a video call and I can't even explain what it was like that day when all I heard him kept saying was thank you, thank you, and thank you. At that very moment, I realized that I had changed not anyone, but my best friends life, and it only took a kind heart, determination, and hard work. Sometimes even the smallest efforts can make a huge difference.