

## **My Personal Journey In Understanding The Value of Community Service**

(Original)

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In life, values give us clear objectives. Positive values serve as a guide on how we behave and act in everyday situations, which normally steer us in the right direction. Having the right values determines our paths in life: how we behave, how we interact and respond with others, and how we make important decisions that impact our lives. I believe that values play an important role in society. As an active member of society, I think values such as community service, volunteering and teamwork are very important. These values act as the foundation of a healthy and positive community. I believe that a person is shaped by the society in which he/she is brought up in. One is educated by their experiences, and guided by their values. Whether one is kind or nasty, right or wrong, these are all determined by the environment one lives in as it shapes one's character.

I mentioned 'community service' as one of the values I hold dear. To me, community service means to aid or contribute to an effort or cause in one's community. To some, going out of their comfort zone to be of service to others requires great effort and motivation. Not all can do this. Before, I believed that if it wasn't my problem or it doesn't concern me, I should ignore it and carry on with my business. But my perspective changed when I got involved in an act of service that changed my life.

During the first wave of the Coronavirus pandemic, Malaysia went into total lockdown. Everyone was not allowed out of their houses unnecessarily, be it to work, school or to run errands. Families were forced to stay indoors to protect themselves from contracting the virus. While this idea worked for a while, the country began seeing negative side effects, especially socioeconomically. Many people were struggling to make ends meet as a result of not being able to work. Those in the lower-income brackets were hit the hardest. The news

was plastered with headlines of woes and cries of desperation of those who were affected.

This troubled me greatly. I was uneasy at the thought that many families were hungry, unable to pay rent, their bills and other basic needs. I was comfortable at home as my family were sheltered from these problems. While I could've ignored the problems of those around me and stayed in my own carefree bubble, I just couldn't shake it out of my mind.

So I decided to do something about it. Together with my brother, we decided to start an online-based, fundraising campaign to raise money to help those in need. We started an Instagram account called @The10RinggitProject, where we hoped to get donations of as little as RM10 (USD2.50) from our friends and family to help a local orphanage in Pahang. The campaign was a success. In one week we raised more than RM16,000. I felt so euphoric handing over that money to the orphanage, as it helped lessen its burden. I felt compelled to help more.

Since that campaign, my brother and I launched several more fundraising campaigns that benefited a hospital, a children's library, and flood victims, among others. Over the next two years, we managed to raise over RM140,000. Every cent went towards the different organizations that we campaigned for and the effect was profound. We received pictures of brand new furniture, books, and clothing for orphanages, equipment for hospitals, and books and devices for libraries that our campaign helped buy. Within each picture, the brand new items weren't the most prominent thing. It was the gleaming, appreciative smiles of the beneficiaries that made me decide that 'community service' is a value I treasure. By being a contributor to community service, I could give back to my community and make a positive impact on people's lives. It makes me feel proud and motivates me to keep going.