

MICAH 6 COMMUNITY

Every once in a while I think that it does us some good just to share stories. At the end of the day we didn't start Micah 6 for giant programs, big buildings, or pounds of produce. We started it for our neighbors.

If you've ever come to Micah 6 Community to volunteer you've likely heard one of us give some version of this talk: ***"We are so grateful you're here to help us with today's projects, but if a neighbor comes up to you and wants to hang out, kick a ball or get to know you, please stop what you're doing and do that. Someone else can finish that job, but you can't recreate that moment."***

That's kind of what this newsletter is going to be. Just stories of my neighbors. This one is simple. I'll send another email sometime with the updates on the projects, but this one is just stories about our work in the neighborhood.

Enjoy.

Ryan

Ryan came to Micah 6 Community through our Summer Youth Employment Program in 2024. She was obviously bright, but like so many of our students, had bought into this idea that they were dumb or at least "not good at school."

At the end of the summer, Ryan made a real commitment to herself that she wanted to finish her senior year strong. She moved in with Coleman and Bethany on the weekdays to ensure she could get up for school. She also worked with her guidance counselor to do credit recovery for the classes she had failed earlier in high school.

Up to that point she had a 1.4 GPA, but in her senior year she earned a 3.2 GPA.

But she didn't stop there. This summer while working in our summer youth employment program she also attended CNA school and earned her certificate.

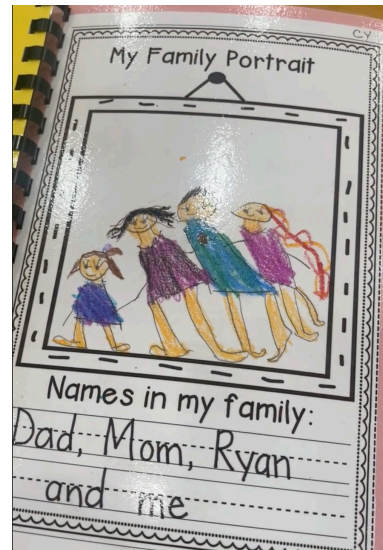


(Above) Ryan's Summer Youth Employment Program photo

(Below) When Caroline was asked to draw our family at school, she included Ryan whom she has always called her big sister.

She starts her first CNA job this week. She also took and has passed her tests for her drivers licenses and we were able to get her a car for work.

Ryan was always incredibly smart and capable. She just needed the right environment to focus, learn and grow while proving to herself that she could do anything she set her mind to



(Above) Andre. (Below) Andre with his "Mr Figure it Out" award.

Andre

Every organization needs a "dude." That is, just a guy you can call anytime to help you move something, fix something, haul something away or pick something up.

That's Andre.

Andre helps us every year haul away debris from our Block Blitz events, move furniture into people's homes when we connect them with new beds, couches, or appliances. Andre is usually our first call when some senior needs their lawn cut to avoid a ticket and is usually the last guy at the end of a project loading bags of trash into his truck after an event.

Last summer, while visiting family in West Virginia, Andre was mistaken for someone that police were looking for, associated with local drug crimes. The police officer asked for Andre's ID, when he asked why, the officer shot Andre in the eye with his taser, making Andre blind in that eye. Through pain, an eye patch, surgery, and now a prosthetic, Andre has remained a committed member of our work. With the payout from his lawsuit, Andre is already making plans to create a program to serve homeless men by offering free showers,



laundry and access to mental health services.

At a recent staff event he was given an award for being the member that best exemplified our core-values and was dubbed "Mr Figure it Out." When he was handed the trophy, he teared up and said, "I've never been given an award before." The statue is now proudly mounted on his dashboard.

Jorge

This summer, I was having breakfast with my friend Erik. Erik is one of these guys who doesn't have a nonprofit or deep coffers, but he is doing a lot of good for the world in his lane. He comes to camp with us every summer and is "nature guy" teaching kids about ponds, wildlife, creepy crawly creatures, birds and more.

Erik said he had a high school kid working with him who needed some help. This kid was a hard worker and a senior at Pontiac High School. His family had been seized by ICE off the street and deported to Mexico without warning. Jorge was the oldest and left with all the paperwork to figure out. He and his siblings are US citizens so they were divvied out among family members, but because he is eighteen no family member had space for him. He had spent a summer living in a local motel and working with Erik, but his time was running out and he needed a more permanent place to live. He moved into Micah 6 Community at the end of the summer and is finishing his senior year.



Last week, PHS had their senior homecoming. Jorge worked with us at the Renaissance Festival and used some of his funds to get a cool outfit for his homecoming. Some of our team took him to Webster and took fun senior homecoming photos. He graduates in May!



When you support Micah 6 Community, you're supporting a lot of big things: Webster Community Center, Emerson Housing Development, etc. But you're also supporting small, but deep meaningful relationship work: rooms for kids to finish high school, basic car repairs to keep a working mom on the road, rent for a senior who has a catering business in her home after a client stiffed her, keeping homeless friends phones on so that they can get a call from their housing worker, rides to church and school, a bag of vending machine chips while we wait with a neighbor at the crisis center, the copay for critical medication, the mom in a new apartment who now has room for a dining room table for her and her kids to sit at together.

We are only able to do the big stuff because of our faithfulness to the "small" stuff. Thank you to everyone who makes this work possible and the big changes we are making through small acts of love and kindness.



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Micah 6 Community
32 Newberry St
Pontiac, MI 48341
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