This is What Leadership Looks Like: Keshav, Age 8, and Arjun, Age 11

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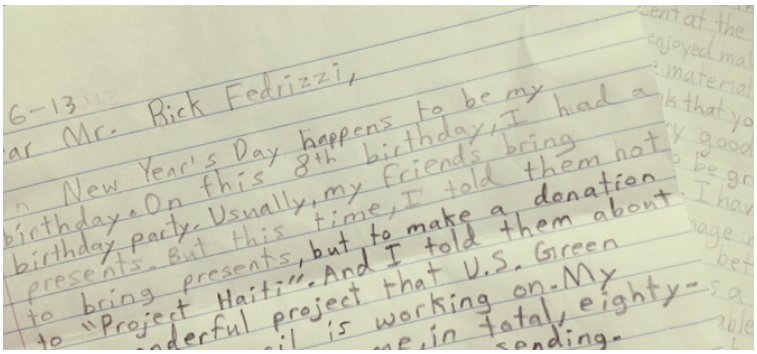

Rick received letters from two boys who are committed to helping Project Haiti & the Center for Green Schools

Sometimes, inspiration comes from unexpected places. That recently happened to me in the form of two letters.

The clever, kind-hearted notes came from brothers Keshav and Arjun, ages 8 and 11. These young men became interested in USGBC's Project Haiti initiative, dedicating their own money and talents toward the cause.

Their two letters speak volumes about a number of things: the power of youth, for one. Keshav and Arjun remind us that everyone possesses the ability to make a difference, regardless of any variable: age, income or situation. With their humility, drive and selflessness, these two also represent the future that we're striving to protect and provide for through our important work to spread healthy, green schools and build a LEED Platinum home base for the children of Haiti.

I don't want to spoil their wonderful stories for you by summarizing them. I urge you to read Keshav and Arjun's words and I challenge you not to be inspired by their involvement in Project Haiti, their selflessness and their engagement. Arjun poses some questions in his letter – I've sent him my ideas, but I'm sure he'd love to hear from you, as well. Please leave your thoughts in the comments.

These letters speak for themselves. I hope they move you like they've moved me. Enjoy.

Dear Mr. Rick Fedrizzi,

New Year's Day happens to be my birthday. On this 8th birthday, I had a birthday party. Usually, my friends bring presents. But this time, I told them not to bring presents, but to make a donation to "Project Haiti." And I told them about this wonderful project that U.S. Green Building Council is working on. My friends have given me, in total, eight-five dollars, which I am sending.

Happy New Year
Best Wishes, Keshav

Hi Mr. Fedrizzi,

I am Arjun, an 11-year-old boy from Raleigh, NC. I have heard of your projects, such as The Center for Green Schools. At my school, I was present at the Green Apple Day of Service, and our school enjoyed making posters and helping to clean up the recyclable material from the school to keep it clean and green. I think that your project, the Center for Green Schools, is a very good one, and I hope that many other schools decide to be green and to keep our environment around us clean. I have also heard that USGBC is building an orphanage in Haiti to give the displaced orphans shelter and a better life until they are adopted. I think that this is a very noble cause, and that those less fortunate are able to lead a better life when the orphanage has been built. I have been inspired by your building of the orphanage, and I decided to work towards this cause by raising money.

I have been performing publicly on the piano for a couple of year with 3 violinist friends of mine. My group got together and decided to raise money towards the construction of this orphanage in Haiti by playing in malls and senior centers. We are proud to be able to say that we have been able to raise $57 in cash so far, and my parents have agreed to match the money that we raise as a group. In the

last 14 days, we have had 3 concerts, each one being about 1 and a half hours long. In those 3 concerts, a few hundred people have stopped to listen. We have been announcing why we are performing and what you are doing in Haiti. However, we are having challenges in directly raising money in our performances because most malls/senior centers have specific charity affiliations, so they do not let us directly raise money if we are not raising it for those specific programs, so what we did is that we got brochures and pins from USGBC about the Haiti project, which we distribute, during our public performances. This will allow the audience to donate online, I am hoping this has brought in some additional donations for this project.

Since you are the leader of this program, we wanted to ask if you had any ideas for what else we can do to raise money for this cause. Can you suggest any venues? Other than the USGBC, is the Haiti project part of any organization's charity affiliations? If you can tell us your ideas, we would be very grateful to you.

Looking forward to hearing back from you.

Arjun

Rick Fedrizzi
President, CEO & Founding Chairman
U.S. Green Building Council

Member employees, USGBC staff, USGBC board

2 comments

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Sandeep Reddy Minuka 15 weeks 4 days ago
Design Engineer, Dar Al-Handasah

That was overwhelming ! Seriously, you go through day-to-day activities and think there is so much pessimism in the world, and a kid's passion & benevolence can fill you with great hope at the end of the day.

christian fekete 1 year 4 days ago
Principal Architect, LEED AP, Christian Fekete Architecture & CM

wow, talk about being proactive! Every little thing adds up. Great work kids!

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