

Winner: Junior Division

Terrinique Sands

Central Eleuthera High School

Grade 9

As you are active in blessing others, they find their burdens easier to bear.

Steve Francis once said, "Blessing others is the most divine work you can do in your life." The truth and reality of life is that everyone needs someone to lean on, especially in these arduous times. Recently in the Bahamas, we have been through two major tragedies: Hurricane Dorian and Covid - 19. These calamities have opened the eyes of many. Despite everything that is occurring in today's world, I have been and still am a blessing to others, as I try to make their burdens easier to bear. Some of the ways that I help to make this possible, is by distributing care packages to the elderly and cleaning the community.

After Hurricane Dorian, there were many families who had lost loved ones and most of their earthly possessions such as homes and clothing. Among the persons who were impacted, were my two cousins. They lost their home and their mother. Feeling sympathetic toward their plight, my grandmother and I allowed them to take temporary residence into our home. As a result, I offered my room so that they could feel comfortable. Due to our act of kindness and love shown, they knew that we cared and they felt very secure. My cousins were able to live a normal life, attend school and be "regular" children all over again. Our blessing helped my family to ease the burden of homelessness and mental struggles that would normally plague one's mind, having experienced such a traumatic experience.

The famous song, "Bind Us Together", reminds me to be my brother's keeper. Since the pandemic, my grandmother and I cook and distribute a meal of soup for the elderly, along with care packages, weekly. I also have devotions with them and it gives me an opportunity to share my gift of prayer. In doing this, the elderly feel a sense of security, especially when they join in the singing, hence "binding us together". This pandemic has taught me to show love to others as the Golden Rule tells us to, "Do unto others, as you would like them to do unto you".

(Matthew 7:12)

One of the things that I personally take pride in, is my surroundings. Last year, I decided to designate a cleaning group to help alleviate trash in the community. We keep the community clean by raking the yard for the elderly and by removing garbage found on the side of the road. The group has lifted the burden of finances for the elderly and placed a feeling of ease on their minds. Taking the initiative to assist the elderly in this regard, has been a blessing to everyone in the community, and it helps to make the environment safe and more enjoyable to live in.

There are so many other ways that we can bless others and lift their burdens. Philippians 2:4 states, "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also the interests of others." I believe that when we help and bless

others, it makes the world a better place. We must all remember that when you bless others, and make their burdens easier to bear, one day your blessings will fall upon you.

**546 words (including topic)**