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# Russ & Jo's Digest



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## Dante's Voice

Sometimes it feels like a high school student can't impact society, but I am learning not to believe those lies.

Our church youth group was helping with a children's Bible club for inner-city children in New Orleans over Spring Break. That is where I met Dante and his two sisters. The sisters were very talkative, but Dante wasn't. He didn't smile much and he mainly talked through his sister, or shook his head. I learned that he was five and was in preschool.

After a while he finally started to talk on his own. I then realized that Dante had a speech disorder, and no one could figure out what he was saying. Most people gave up trying to understand him and moved on to help other kids. I know how frustrating it is not being able to communicate because I had a speech disorder when I was younger. It is so maddening when people pretend to know what you are saying, but really don't have a clue. I was determined to be able to

communicate with Dante.

By the end of that day, I was beginning to understand some of what he said. With patience and teamwork throughout the week,

Dante and I eventually learned how to communicate. Once he knew I truly understood him, he was all smiles and happiness. We were buddies that week and he never left my side.



Dante and Amy with his Bible Club craft.

I now know that giving of myself has touched the life of another, and hopefully has a ripple effect in the community around him. Did that one week transform his life? Probably not, but it will leave a lasting memory for both of us.

Hopefully, Dante has come to realize that people want to know what he has to say even if it is difficult for him. He needs to persevere and eventually he will find someone who can understand him. For me, I am changed by knowing that in a small way, giving of myself and persevering to understand, I gave a voice to a little boy and brought a smile to his face.

*Amy Licht*

### Notes from Mom & Dad:

Your prayers for our kids over all these years have accomplished much. Thank you! Amy has chosen to attend Young Harris College in north Georgia. She will be running for the cross-country team there as well as studying early childhood education.

*In Him, Russ & Jo Anne*