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This I Believe Essay

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Gwenn Gideon

I believe in the power of people to create change. I believe that no matter what age, race, or religion, one person can make a difference in the world. I learned this lesson when I was thirteen years old. I was coming up with a community service project for my Bat Mitzvah and had just finished reading The Diary of Anne Frank. I had also read an article discussing the Lost Girls of Sudan and different organizations that help bring girls from the Sudan to safety in the United States. I then realized that I was about the same age as Anne Frank when she went into hiding, and the girls in the Sudan were only a little older. This really struck home with me and made me realize that something needed to be done. I remember thinking, however, “what can a thirteen year old girl possibly do to help make a difference?” Despite my fears, I decided to put my feelings into action and organized a dance benefit concert to raise money to bring a girl and her baby from the Sudan to the United States. I worked extremely hard for almost 3 years and wound up raising a little over \$15,000. The girls came over and I am currently in touch with them. They call me their sister and I love them very much. However, the process was not so easy in the beginning. Anytime I wanted to get anything done, I had older people questioning me. “Don’t you think you might be reaching a little too high?” “You’re so young. You can’t really make a difference.” “Maybe you should be a little more realistic.” These comments made me doubt myself. But with the support of my family and friends, I ignored the negativity and just believed in myself. The amazing thing was that once I spoke up and took that first step toward change, people started to listen and follow and we wound up creating something big. Anne Frank once wrote in her diary, “In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart.” Anne inspired me

to make changes to my life and my way of thinking. I learned that I did not have to be a powerful adult to take a stand. Anne's spirit of hope inspired me to reach to the other side of the globe to help stop some of the suffering. I saved someone's life and I helped repair a part of the world. This entire experience made me realize that no matter how much evil exists in this world, the amount of love of which everyone is capable is so much stronger. I now wake up every morning thinking of what new ways I can make a difference in someone's life, whether it be someone from around the corner or around the world. We all have the power to create change. All one has to do is believe in one's self and those around you will follow.