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Santa Claus

Tommy Smith
trs014@bucknell.edu

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THIS I BELIEVE

By Thomas R. Smith

Bucknell ID # 11046528

Ho! Ho! Ho! I believe in Santa Claus! Last Christmas Eve, adorned in the authentic red suit and white whiskers, I was Santa for Operation Santa Claus, delivering toys to awe-filled children in impoverished homes on this blessed night. I must admit I was initially terrified, fearing that any inadequacy in my performance could destroy a child's fantasy of Santa. I soon discovered, however, that societal injustices may have already destroyed hopes and fantasies of these children. Driving to their homes with a team of elves, we observed deplorably dangerous conditions... inoperable railroad crossings, broken streetlights, missing sewer covers. I wondered: Are the lives of low-income Americans considered less precious by our society? What impact could one night of service accomplish in this desperately deprived neighborhood? Had I been overly idealistic to think that a single toy presented by an amateur Santa could bring happiness to a child suffering the ravages of such horrific poverty? I felt hopelessly disillusioned and inadequate in my role as Santa Claus. Miraculously, however, once I witnessed the joyful belief in the eyes of children, I was undeniably possessed with the genuine spirit of Santa and this was the most sacred and glorious Christmas ever. Indeed, I was Santa Claus, and you can be Santa Claus too. In fact, anyone who feels the undeniable urge to give of him/herself to others at this sacred time of year, whether through gifts, service, or just through a random act of kindness, is indeed Santa Claus. We do not even need the authentic red suit and white whiskers. Best of all, if we truly believe in Santa Claus, his spirit of generosity, peace, and justice will abide in our hearts throughout the entire year... this I believe.