

Gallant Kids

Handing Out Hope and Help

By Robert Lerosé

Ten-year-old Jahkil Jackson remembers going with his aunt and cousin a few years ago to hand out chili to people who were homeless. He felt sad to see how little the people had, and he wanted to do more for them.

“Every time I saw a person in need on the street, I wanted to give them money. But my parents said we’d go broke,” Jahkil says.

Blessing Bags

While talking with his parents about other ways to help, Jahkil learned that one of his mother’s friends gave out bags of supplies at holiday time. That got Jahkil excited. He started creating and handing out “blessing bags” for people who are homeless—bags filled with “things that can help them on a daily basis,” he says, such as granola bars, toothpaste, tissues, socks, and hand cleaner.

When people heard about his project, they pitched in. Some of them donated items. Others gave money for supplies. Friends and volunteers helped fill the bags.

With his mom, Jahkil hands the kits to people living on the street and in shelters and sends them to disaster victims. In 2016, Jahkil gave out 1,627 kits, then 5,140 in 2017. His goal for 2018 is to distribute 6,000 blessing bags.

Word Gets Out

Jahkil’s generosity and hard work have made him well known. At school, he says, “Kids say congratulations to me with everything that I’m doing.”

Former President Barack Obama heard about Jahkil’s work and wrote that it is one of the “stories . . . that remind us what’s best about America.” For Jahkil, it was exciting that President Obama knew his name. “I actually got to meet him in person and talk to him,” he says.

Jahkil started an organization called Project I Am to continue helping people in need and to encourage others to do the same.

Jahkil Jackson makes and distributes “blessing bags” for people in need.

What Can Kids Do?

Jahkil hopes to inspire other kids to find ways to make a difference. “They don’t have to wait until they’re an adult to become a change agent. They can do it right now,” he says.

Highlights is proud to know this Gallant Kid. 

