



Helping Others Backstory

One morning on her way to work, Oral Lee stopped by a local grocery store to make her usual purchase of some peanuts and a soda. This particular morning, Ms. Brown was approached by a little girl asking for a quarter. Since all she had was a \$5 dollar bill, Oral Lee invited the little girl to go with her to the store to get some change. When inside the store, Ms. Brown told the little girl that she could go pick out anything she wanted. Instead of choosing candy or gum, which would have been the first choice for most kids, the little girl immediately ran for a loaf of bread. Oral Lee asked the girl if she went to school and she quietly responded, "sometimes" as she shyly thanked Ms. Brown and quickly disappeared around the corner.

Oral Lee couldn't sleep that night and had to find the little girl. She went to the school where she would have attended and never found her. Instead, she found a lot of other kids in less than ideal conditions. In an almost impulsive decision, Oral Lee Brown decided to "adopt" a class of 23 East Oakland, California first-graders. She told them, "Stay in school, and I'll send you to college." The realtor began saving immediately, putting \$10,000 per year in a fund from her \$45,000 salary.

Ms. Brown did more than simply make a promise to the children; she became an active part of their lives. She became a benefactor, mentor, and second mother to those 23 first-graders. She began with regular visits, Saturday tutorials, and parent meetings. She tracked each child's attendance and grades; bought gifts; and purchased supplies.

Ms. Brown took the students on recruiting trips to colleges and attended nine different high school graduations. She also accompanied each student to college. Nineteen of the students in that first class enrolled in college and three others went into trade schools. Those students all graduated from college in 2003 and 2004.

Ms. Brown is now on her 6th class of "adopted" students and over 125 kids have benefited from her generosity. Some of these students in college remark that if it hadn't been for Ms. Brown, they would never have had a chance to get an education. She says, "Somebody has to train these kids. Somebody has to teach them, and if not me, who? If not now, when? We must do it. It's got to be done."

Oral Lee's ultimate goal is to open a boarding school for 450 kids and allow them the opportunity to receive an Ivy League education. It's people like Ms. Brown that teach us what the value of Helping Others really means.

[See her tell her story on the FOX and Friends morning show here!](#)

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