



POINTS
OF LIGHT

DAILY POINT OF LIGHT

INSPIRED BY GRANDMOTHER, TEEN TAKES OVER FAMILY BOOK DONATIONS; EXPANDS TO HELPING GIRLS ACROSS THE GLOBE

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When Eden Schneck was only 6 years old, she eagerly helped sort and package donated books for other children. At the time, her oldest brother, Max, was a freshman in high school. Eden's other older brothers, Jonathan and Jeremy, also took their turns collecting books for less fortunate kids. They did it in honor of their grandmother, a schoolteacher who grew up in rural Texas and later taught school in Pittsburgh, Pa. She believed so strongly in literacy that she'd used her own money and time to stock school libraries.

When Eden was 14 and a freshman in high school, it was her turn to take over the family tradition and become president of Reading Reflections, the book donation nonprofit they'd started. By this time, the Schnecks had expanded into donating books both locally and overseas, to Nigeria.

A representative of the Hope and Dreams Initiative, a New York-based NGO that helps families in Nigeria approached Eden with a request she'd hesitated to ask Eden's brothers: Could she help collect and ship sanitary products so girls in Nigeria wouldn't need to miss school for lack of supplies? Eden – now a senior at North Shore Hebrew Academy — agreed and has successfully sent shipments of products, packaged discreetly in colorful bags that Eden purchased herself.

Describe your volunteer role with [Reading Reflections](#).

"I answer emails at least three times a day to arrange book pickups, book meets, drives to deliver the books where they need to go, etc. I run the drives, I tell them the ages of books needed, everything. I collect books for all ages, or sometimes, a school will ask for say, dictionaries, so we try to find those. We pack 100 books to a box and we deliver the boxes three to six times a week."

How many schools have you served?

"There have been hundreds of schools over the years. We've donated books all over Long Island and we've filled libraries in Nigeria. I have a lot of friends who live in other states and I always try to get them to donate books in their area. We donate about 3,000 books a week."



What's been the most rewarding part of your work?

"The times that I've seen the reaction from children. I have had opportunities to deliver the books directly to the kids. Seeing their reaction is amazing! I've gotten letters that are so heart-warming, it's all worth it. It's beyond rewarding."

What are some of the hard parts of your volunteer work?

"It's hard to manage school at the same time. I attend school from 8 a.m. to 4:40 p.m. I'm not only emailing, I'm the one physically organizing the books by age, and figuring which books go where. It takes hours."

What have you learned through your experiences as a volunteer?

“I learned that not everyone is as fortunate as the people around Long Island. Some kids don’t have access to books, something that seems so easy and so simple to get ahold of to me. It’s crazy when it’s right around the corner that kids don’t have access to books. They’re so excited to get them.”

What do you want people, especially other young people, to learn from your story?

“That it’s so important to help out. Everyone really can make an impact, whether small or large. It’s really so important to give back to your community. I hope to keep doing this no matter where I go to college.”

What are your plans going forward?

“I really like entrepreneurship. I consider myself innovative and I’m interested in helping people, so something like global health policy and entrepreneurship is something I’d be very interested in.”

By Kay Nolan