

An Everyday Hero

Webster Dictionary defines a hero as "a person who is admired or idealized for courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities". Those are some pretty big requirements which can be hard to fulfill. There are very few people who can say that they have completed such a task. I prefer a quote from Christopher Reeve. He says that "a hero is someone who, in spite of weakness, doubt or not always knowing the answers, goes ahead and overcomes anyway". This definition of a hero is more relatable to most. With this definition, everyone can call themselves a hero as long as they make the choice to go for it. Both Darryl and Ryan fit into this definition of a hero. Throughout their lives, they both have set examples of how to be an everyday hero. Like them, as a student of St. Lawrence and De La Salle, I know that they have been taught and given opportunities to be a hero. From the stories I have heard from faculty and friends, they both exceeded this definition of hero. There have been times where I too have followed their model and been an everyday hero. One example that comes to mind is when I went to New Orleans my junior year to volunteer with the St. Bernard Project.

The St. Bernard Project is a non-profit organization that helps victims of natural disasters. I am part of the International Baccalaureate Programme at De La Salle. One requirement of the program is to complete a service project. Myself and seven other students went to New Orleans to help rebuild the home of a woman and her sister. Their home was destroyed in 2005 from Hurricane Katrina and was still not fixed. My classmates and I helped with sanding and mudding all the walls of the house so that they can be painted and finished. We worked for a week and made considerable progress. A hero is someone who commits an act of kindness and demonstrates

selflessness. In the beginning of the trip, I definitely had my weaknesses and doubts. Yes, I was committing an act of kindness, but I was not acting selflessly. I knew that I had to complete this project in order to pass the program, so I was not acting for the right reasons. However, this changed when we were lucky enough to meet with the owner of the house. She visited us when we were working one day and we were able to talk to her about how difficult it was for her to survive when her house was destroyed. What changed my attitude was when she called us her heroes. She said that we have given her a second chance at life. I then started to realize what the people of New Orleans had to go through, especially the poor. I then started to work for them and not for my own selfish needs. It made the whole experience so much more enjoyable and fulfilling. This turned my actions into true acts of kindness and selflessness; what a true hero is. I was able to overcome my weakness and doubt and complete what I wanted.

When reading the prompt for this essay, I wanted to write about something that met the standards that Darryl and Ryan made of everyday heroes. They were both so active in the community, and it was difficult to choose something that they would consider a heroic action. I believe that this example of mine truly engulfs the qualities that made them heroes. All of these qualities were shown through this incredible experience. I hope that this would be enough to be called a hero in the eyes of Darryl and Ryan.