***Prompt 7***

***What have you done to make your school or community a better place***

As my fingertips touched this little bluish-green creature, it immediately turned into an almost symmetrical oval-shaped hard object shell. As I put it on my palm and eventually realized I wasn’t a threat, its tail and head emerged out of its shell as it slowly moved away into the sea, along with its 388 comrades. Yet, their odds of survival are dim: natural predators and rampant poaching meant only one in 1,000 hatchlings would actually survive long enough to lay eggs again. So, at the Kurma Asih turtle conservation program, we dedicate our lives to save these Olive Ridley sea turtles.

From the start, the dedication each volunteer put into protecting these turtles was inspiring. They spent their weekends and worked long hours to clean the beaches, build and expand the turtle shelters, and ensure the ideal temperature was maintained for the eggs to hatch. Despite all that, the program received limited funding from the government and donors due to their lack of exposure.

Noticing this, I decided to use the recent popularity of tote bags and recycled-material shirts to both raise funds and garner the program more exposure. To create a long-term impact for these turtles for future generations to follow, I designed the merchandise with infographics concerning conditions of the Olive Ridley turtles and utilized the “#savetheturtles” hashtag and posting regular Instagram stories to capture the turtles’ daily shenanigans. Moreover, I also incorporated direct marketing via Whatsapp while also adding the link to the Kurma Asih conservation for people to directly connect with us.

A few months later, we were delighted to see that people showed interest in the turtles and wanted to contribute. In the end, we managed to raise enough funds to shelter 389 eggs!

The efforts we made in social media and merchandise sales have enabled the local government to expand the Kurma Asih conservatory and renovate it so that it can be more welcoming for tourists and supporters to visit. Without realizing it, the time I spent with Kurma Asih and the turtles helped me develop compassion towards the well-being of our environment.