Global Game Changers (GGC) in Louisville Kentucky previously honored Muhammad Ali and Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthdays, by creating a recognition lesson for 50 eager at-risk K-5th graders during the launch of its Spring 2017 program. GGC partnered with Derek Anderson and his program Acts of Kindness (A.O.K.), OGO Enterprises LLC., and Ashley Novak Butler from Lift a Life.

To encourage kids to be like King and Ali by serving others through recognition, GGC employed the OGO J.A.R., which stands for O Great One Jackpot of Acknowledgement and Recognition, an educational tool created by former Yum! Brands CEO, David Novak.

The kids wrote strips of acknowledgement for Anderson, for visiting with them and they were inspired to create and deliver a J.A.R. to Young Elementary security monitor Terry Chambers, who made them feel safe.

OGO Enterprises, inspired by GGC’s previous success, came back with an offer to donate 12,000 OGO J.A.R.’s to expand its impact city-wide. GGC knew it could reach all students in the district with support from a generous AmeriCorps Kentucky National Days of Service and Community Engagement Volunteer Generation Fund Mini-Grant.

Thus in the cold of February, three tractor trailers full OGO J.A.R.s arrived on 75 pallets to be loaded into a 10,000 square-foot donated warehouse and realizing the magnitude GGC began documenting their journey.

April 14-22, 2018, during National Volunteer Week and the Mayor’s Give a Day Week, 116,435 volunteer participated in 117,025 hours of service recognizing school staff for making their school a better place. Between 180 schools including Jefferson County Public, Archdiocese, and several Independent Schools, students recognized over 6,164 school staff members.

GGC engaged its film and social media team to understand how recognition culture permeated within the community by capturing the reactions to the lesson and the constant surprise the recipients felt in receiving their OGO J.A.R.

Staci Rampenthal’s level 5 class at Sacred Heart Model School recognized retiring Assistant Principal Ann Carol Grant, who had served the school for 36 years, and each student read personal messages they wrote thanking her for being a spiritual leader and source of strength in their community. Rampenthal informed the film team, she could think of no one more deserving of the OGO J.A.R., because Assistant Principal Grant did everything and signed every email “for the students”.

This was just one of hundreds of stories GGC captured over the course of the project’s implementation in the schools. Through the stories and the project GGC forged relations with school administrators for public, private and independent schools, which are now areas of the county to expand GGC’s core programming.

The project initiated a culture of recognition encouraging students to become engaged citizens who work to positively to impact their communities.

GGC in turn recognizes the importance of AmeriCorps’ contributions from the Mini-Grant to VISTAs building capacity for the project, and looking to take the “Power of Recognition” one step further, GGC is producing a documentary to inspire others nationwide to impact their communities through recognition.