Ravi UC Essay Draft

**Prompt #7**

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

Attending the Friday Prayers at my local mosque has made the sight of volunteers on the parking lot distributing food to the less fortunate a common one. Yet it was one day in 9th grade – people persistently queueing in the pouring rain having to fight just for the most basic of needs against the backdrop of the comfortable umbrella and car waiting for me – that made me stop my track. “I’m done being a spectator,” I committed to myself that day.

“*Bersyukur Menjadi Indonesia”* or BMI, which means “grateful to become Indonesian,” was the non-profit initiative I invested my time in. One of their ongoing projects was a bazaar that sells affordable, daily necessities to locals in need for which proceedings will go to select orphanages.

With the limited manpower we had, I was assigned a triple duty to gather, sort, and sell the goods. Thus, I started by knocking on the doors of everyone in my neighborhood and be their channel to donate any stuff they no longer need or use. This was honestly a very challenging first step as I had to overcome my fear of starting a conversation.

Next, I would categorize all donations based on needs, such as groceries and cookware into household boxes and books and stationery under the education box. The bazaar opened to great enthusiasm but soon enough wavered after a couple of weeks. With my weekend shifts starting at eight, I’d come earlier and bundle the goods as inspired by the notion of care packs – a little tradition my family runs. This way, potential buyers come home with a higher value than what they paid. For me though, it was not necessarily about the faster turnover my sales tactic generated, but more so the little conversations I had with them as they shared their stories and expressed their gratitude towards the initiative.

Joining BMI was an eye-opening experience to say the least. While my participation was perhaps trivial in the grand scheme of things, it was for me a revelation on how a small act of kindness could go a long way.

*Hi Ravi!*

*I really like this piece of yours! I think it was very well substantiated and addresses the prompt seamlessly. Good job!*

*- Matthew*