Ravi UC Essay Draft

**Prompt #7**

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

As I attend the Friday Prayers at my local mosque, I often see volunteers in the parking lot giving out foods to the less fortunate. After years of witnessing this act of kindness, it never once crossed my mind that I’d be able to do something like that. One day in 9th grade, I witnessed them waiting in the pouring rain just to get food. This was the event that made me care about other people and drove me to become one of such volunteers.

I decided to join a non-profit initiative called “*Bersyukur Menjadi Indonesia”* or BMI, which means “grateful to become Indonesian.” One of their projects was to organize a bazaar that sells cheap and affordable essential goods to the locals in need and then use the proceedings to help orphanages.

My responsibilities were to gather, sort, and sell the goods. The first thing I did was to knock on the doors of everyone in my neighborhood and build awareness to inquire them to donate. The first step was challenging as I had to overcome my fear of starting a conversation.

Next, I would then sort and categorized the donated goods based on needs, such as cookware, groceries, clothing, and books. To ensure we had more sales and, thus, more budget to help orphanages, I would bundle the goods into a care packs – one with higher value, but at a lower price per item – rather than having them sold separately.

During the bazaar, I would become the sales clerk from 8 AM to 3 PM on the weekends. It was not being the ‘salesman’ part that I treasure so much, rather it was the little conversations I had with them. I was moved as I listened to their stories and expressed how grateful they are to the initiative.

My participation in BMI was my first truly eye-opening experience. It made me realized that there are still so many people in Indonesia that needs our help. While my participation was one that could be considered as trivial, for me, that was truly a revelation on how a small act of kindness can go a long way.