It was the first day of school, and Mrs. Carol was preparing for the day. She put on her dress, grabbed her car keys and was off to work at Chazewell Elementary School. Mrs. Carol wanted the day to go well and for the whole school year to go well. She had already been to school during the pre-school teachers’ only work week and had carefully prepared the students’ name tags and taped them on the desks. Now, Mrs. Carol was ready to receive her students the on this last first day of school. This was going to be a great year for Mrs. Carol.

The bell rang at 8:15 and this year’s students arrived with their first-day-of-school smiles and friendly greetings. Mrs. Carol’s students were all set for the best school year ever with their new boxes of crayons, sharpened pencils, and boxes of tissues. This was going to be a great year for the students in third grade.

As the year moved along, just as it had every other year, Mrs. Carol began to understand each student one by one, who they were, and she tried her very best to connect with each student. Knowing her students well had always been important to Mrs. Carol.

Mrs. Carol took notice that Daysha was an extremely kind student who wanted to help others. Daysha was quick to get the tissues for a crying student, quick to get the trash can for a student who might happen to get sick, quick to offer a hug to an upset student. Mrs. Carol told Daysha, “I see big things in your future. Promise me that you will always remain kind and caring towards others.” Daysha lit up and smiled.

On another occasion, Mrs. Carol observed Leon building with his Legos during freetime. His Lego creation was a work of art, a building so creative that Mrs. Carol had to comment, “I see big things in your future. Promise me that you will always keep putting things together and keep making magnificent structures.” Leon gave Mrs. Carol the biggest grin.

While out on the playground Max and Kevin were involved in something together. The two boys were using sticks to make a trench to drain a puddle that had formed on the playground. Mrs. Carol was fascinated by the boys’ ingenuity. Most of the time boys playing in the water would have been a recipe for trouble, but not in the eyes of Mrs. Carol. Mrs. Carol offered, “Boys, I see big things in your future. Promise me that you will continue to think about how things flow and move around.” The boys gave Mrs. Carol a thumbs up.

Then, there was Xavier who always knew when the class needed to go somewhere. Xavier would say, “Mrs. Carol, it is time for us to go to lunch. Mrs. Carol, it is time for us to have recess. Mrs. Carol, it is time for us to pack up.” Mrs. Carol couldn’t help to appreciate Xavier’s ability to keep track of time throughout the day. Mrs. Carol told Xavier, “I see big things in your future. Promise me that you will always pay attention to numbers throughout your life. You love working with numbers.” Xavier said, “I love math Mrs. Carol,” and smiled.

Mrs. Carol continued to teach her students reading and writing lessons. They also worked hard on their math and science skills. Yet, Mrs. Carol was equally interested, if not more so, in really knowing the unique gifts and qualities of each and every one of her students, and she continued to do this all through the school year just as she had aways done.

Mrs. Carol began to think about her students in a way that made her wonder what each student would become in the future. She wondered if the world would see all of their talents, they way she had seen them. She wondered what each student would be when they grew up.

As Mrs. Carol went through this year as a teacher, her last year, she reflected back when she was a little girl and what had made her become a teacher. When Mrs. Carol was a little girl, she was called Sarah Anne because she was a little girl then.

Sarah Anne had two other friends, Cathy and Peggy. The three girls would play together.

But, Cathy and Peggy were not so kind and not very nice to Sarah Anne. They stuck their tongues out at Sarah Anne. They called her names like “buck tooth girl” and “freckle face girl.” Cathy and Peggy were awfully mean to Sarah Anne. Cathy and Peggy wanted to make Sarah Anne mean like them. Sarah Anne begged for the girls to stop being cruel and pleaded with them to “quit it, please, quit it.” The mean girls repeated Sarah Anne’s words back to her in a mocking tone, “Sarah Anne wants us to quit it, quit it, quit it, quit it.” And the mean girls would laugh at Sarah Anne.

Sarah Anne ran home crying to her dad. “Daddy, Daddy, please make the mean girls stop. They tease me. They are so cruel.” “Daddy, I can’t take it anymore.” And Sarah Anne cried the biggest heartfelt tears, and she was very emotional.

Sarah Anne’s dad said this to her, “Sarah Anne, you are the kindest and sweetest girl. You are so giving of yourself to others. You truly care about others and what happens to them. Those girls are missing out on knowing your true qualities.” Sarah Anne’s father said, “Promise me that you will continue to offer kindness to others even when they are mean to you. Continue to find the good in others and help them build on the good that you see in them.” Sarah Anne replied back to her father, “Yes, daddy, I promise to do that,” and she wiped away her tears.

As time went on, Sarah Anne became Mrs. Carol, a teacher, and she kept that promise to her dad. She looked for the good in her students and told them about the good she saw in each and every one of them. Mrs. Carol inspired her students to recognize the good they had in themselves and develop their unique qualities.

Mrs. Carol eventually retired from teaching, became an old lady who had to start living a nursing home as she was confined to wheelchair now and couldn’t get around so well. Mrs. Carol needed help living. She grew lonely and forgotten.

Some of Mrs. Carol’s former students learned that Mrs. Carol was living in the local nursing home and deiced to pay her a visit. Mrs. Carol had the following visitors.

Daysha, the kind and nurturing student grew up to become a nurse helping out with new born babies at the hospital.

Leon, the creative Lego builder grew up to become an engineer who helped with replacing old, outdated bridges with new and safer ones.

Max and Kevin, the boys who loved digging in the mud, grew up to become plumbers and went into business together and ran a very successful plumbing business.

Xavier, the kid who loved numbers, became an excellent banker who helped keep everyone’s money safe.

Mrs. Carol was delighted that she had these visitors come by to see her. These students had kept their promise to Mrs. Carol just as she had kept her promise to her Daddy all of those years ago.

Mrs. Carol thought about all of the students’ who she taught throughout the years and hoped that they had kept their promises, too.