

School Gift Program

“Buddy Bench” OR “Kindness Library”

Background Information

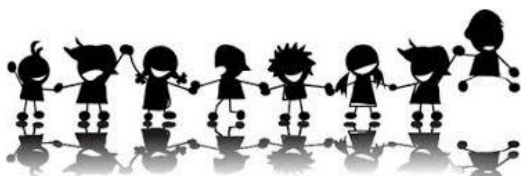
Joseph Scott Middlemiss was born into this world on May 31, 2007 and was fighting for life from his very first breath. His fiery spirit and passionate desire to live every day to the fullest were ignited at the moment of birth and continued to blossom as he grew. Joseph was born with a rare **congenital heart disease** known as **cardiomyopathy**. Moments after birth, a chest extra x-ray revealed the telltale sign of an extremely enlarged heart. Ironically, it was this enlarged heart that set him on a lifetime of medical struggles. At the same time, that BIG HEART symbolized all the love Joe was to emulate in his short lifetime.

Spreading love was something that Joseph Scott did very well. It was HIS gift that seemed to be inborn and instinctual to him. Whether it was through a simple smile that was given to a stranger in passing, an offer to help a friend who was struggling, a hug and words of encouragement extended at just the right time, a song written and presented with the hope of lifting spirits, or other numerous offers of service, Joseph continually shared his love to open the hearts of family members, friends, and strangers, alike. On September 23, 2013, Joseph, who had been medically stable and thriving at the time, passed away very suddenly and earned his angel wings.

Upon suddenly losing their beloved son, Joseph, Scott and Kate Middlemiss lived through every parent's worst nightmare. In an attempt to move through their own grief and carry on their son's legacy of love, they began carrying out acts of kindness in Joseph's memory. Not only was the experience cathartic and healing, but it also opened their eyes to the power of kindness and its potential to change lives. In December 2013, Scott and Kate began the *Joseph Middlemiss “All You Need is Love” Mission*, which is a kindness, “pay it forward” project. To date, over 8,000 random acts of kindness have been spread INTERNATIONALLY.

Following the success of this mission, Scott and Kate went to work on creating a foundation to honor Joseph and all he did to make a difference in this world. In February 2014, the Joseph Middlemiss Big Heart Foundation was incorporated. Since the foundation's incorporation, Scott and Kate have reached out to schools, youth centers, camps, and other child-centered facilities in an effort to promote lessons in kindness for today's youth. Their efforts have surpassed expectations and have, hopefully, had a profound impact on the community.

As a foundation, their mission is multi-faceted. Goal Number 2 in the Articles of Incorporation reads: 2) *The Joseph Middlemiss Big Heart Foundation strives to educate children on the power of kindness by supporting the efforts of schools (creating and leading motivational assemblies, providing books, materials, and related resources), and by empowering students through scholarships for music and martial arts.*



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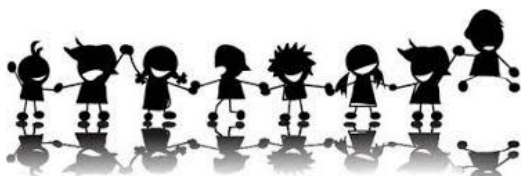
Background Information, continued

In an effort to carry out this goal, the foundation consulted various professionals who specialize in child development and researched many avenues. One idea that was instantly brought to the table was the “Buddy Bench.” A young man named Christian, a student at the Roundtown School in York, Pennsylvania, first conceived this simple, yet brilliant, concept. Christian’s goal was to create a spot to eliminate loneliness and foster friendship on the playground. In an attempt to send a message of inclusion and kindness, he petitioned his principal to allocate a special bench as a meeting spot for children in need of a “buddy” or playmate. Administrators in Christian’s school embraced his idea and the first bench of its kind was erected at his school. Similar “Buddy Benches” now grace playgrounds across the country. It is our foundation’s desire to bring one such bench to as many schools as possible throughout the country and world!

As a result of the prevalence of schools that already have built or installed a Buddy Bench on their playgrounds, the foundation felt it was important and necessary to offer an alternative “kindness gift” to schools that already have a bench at their school. So, the second option for a gift for a nominated school is a bookcase filled with books that teach and highlight lessons in kindness. In essence, we would add a “kindness section” to the school library! This mobile bookshelf is filled with quality mentor texts that will help foster and support beautiful friendships and kindness initiatives at the school. Some schools may choose to use the bookcase to create special “Kindness Corners” in their libraries, while others may opt to move the bookcase to different locations around the school building.

Not only does a gift of a “Buddy Bench” or a “Kindness Library” represent our foundation’s goal, but it also aligns perfectly with the principles and core values sought in most every elementary school’s social emotional curriculum. These gifts represent and touch upon many values that we hope to instill in our youth, our future, such as respect, kindness, empathy, and inclusion. The “Buddy Bench” or the “Kindness Library” will provide a concrete place for students to initiate inclusive behaviors while fostering friendships and reinforcing kindness.

The *Joseph Middlemiss Big Heart Foundation* is excited to provide a gift of one “Buddy Bench” and two “Kindness Libraries” each month to schools that believe in these types of tools to support inclusive behavior on the school’s playground and to supplement the school’s social emotional curriculum. The hope is that this gift will help to reinforce the school’s culture of kindness and compassion.



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Nomination Contents

- ✓ Nomination Specifics
- ✓ Nomination Form
- ✓ Photo/Video & Media Waiver

Nomination Specifics

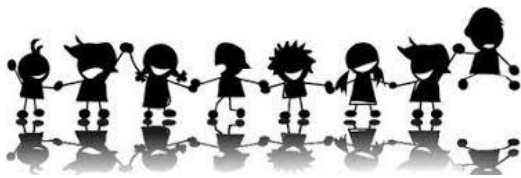
- ♥ Nominated schools may be public or private.
- ♥ Nominations for The Joseph Middlemiss Big Heart Foundation School Gift Programs are accepted on a rolling basis and reviewed on a continual basis.
- ♥ The nominated school that is selected will be notified on the last day of each month.
- ♥ Mail or email your nomination to:

- o **Email:** smiddlemiss.jmbigheart@gmail.com
cmanganis.jmbigheart@gmail.com
cdixon.jmbigheart@gmail.com

(Enter “School Gift Program” into the Subject Line)

OR

- o **Mail:** The Joseph Middlemiss Big Heart Foundation
Attn: School Gift Program
P.O. Box 428
Dracut, MA 01826



School Gift Program “Buddy Bench” OR “Kindness Library”

Nomination Form



Choice of School Gift (circle one): **BUDDY BENCH** or **KINDNESS LIBRARY**

Nominator's Name: _____

Nominator's Relationship to School (i.e., Staff Member, Parent, Student): _____

Nominator's Email: _____

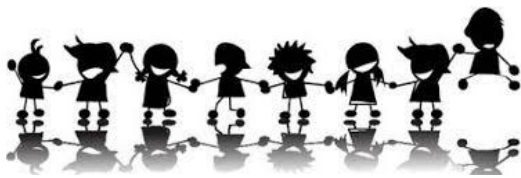
Nominator's Primary Phone: _____

Name of School: _____

School Address: _____

Grade Levels: _____

Number of Students: _____

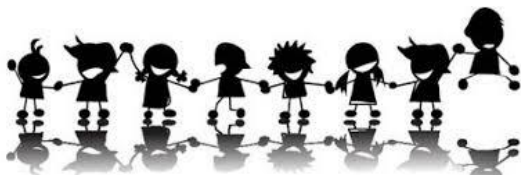


School Gift Program

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Nomination Form, continued

- 1. Please tell us about your school and explain why this school should receive the selected school gift. When answering this question, please include the following information (feel free to write in the space below and/or attach an additional sheet):**
 - **Why does this school deserve/need the selected gift?**
 - **Describe three or more qualities that make this school unique.**
 - **How do you envision this gift helping to create a positive school environment?**
 - **Please feel free to include/attach photos, student or staff letters, student or staff videos, or other files to your response.**



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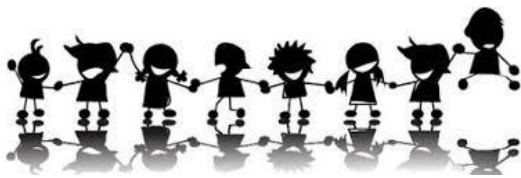
“Buddy Bench” OR “Kindness Library”

Nomination Form, continued

2. What programs are currently in place to support social emotional learning at the nominated school?

(Please describe the school’s culture and core values that are in place to support the use of a “Buddy Bench” or “Kindness Library”.)

3. How will the school roll out, implement, and continually reinforce this school gift at the school?



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Nomination Verification

By signing below, I am verifying that the nomination of the bench was discussed with and approved by administration of the nominated school.

Nominator's Signature

Date

Photo/Video & Media Waiver

By signing this release, I agree to and acknowledge that pictures or videos taken of the nominated school may be highlighted in media releases to announce the recipient and to publicize the receipt of the “Buddy Bench” or “Kindness Library”. The pictures, videos, and media releases may be posted on The Joseph Middlemiss Big Heart Foundation website and social media pages, on signage or advertisements for The Joseph Middlemiss Big Heart Foundation or the School Gift Program, or in newspaper or magazine articles about Buddy Benches or Kindness Libraries.

School Administrator's Signature

Date

Do we have permission to contact you regarding future events?

Yes _____ No _____