

Your Moment of Greatness Depends on how you handle the moment.



It can be argued that in the life of every human being exists the potential for greatness. If this is true then

there is also a moment in every human being's life that determines whether or not he will find it. In the spirit of NSA, let us also assume that the moment is not marked by the size of one's bank account or the status of one's recognition in your industry or association. Instead, let us assume that the moment of greatness occurs when a man moves from the idea of giving without a possibility of receiving anything in return to acting on the idea.

What does this moment look like in the life of a speaker? For the answer, I decided to look at the process one man and his family went through to get to their moment. I might add at this point that more than once I was asked by this man to make sure the article was written more for the benefit of the

organization he's helping than to commend him or his family.

The story begins as part of a journey Joe Healey and his family took when they lived for 18 months in a motor home. It was on this trip that one stop in Virginia Beach, Va., hooked them up with an old friend of Joe's who was the director of a very unique organization.

The organization is Youth Entertainment Studios or YES. Through the use of digital studios and summer camps, YES draws in the at-risk youth of the inner city in the most unique way. Kids actually get involved in producing multi-media projects using state-of-the-art technology and computers. People like Dan Rather and actor/director Blair Underwood have taken an interest in YES. Actor, producer and director Edward James Olmos once said, "YES is one of the most innovative and exciting educational programs I've come across."

While there, Joe found himself fascinated by what he saw. He witnessed the desperate needs that exist for so many kids in America, and saw what good was being done by YES. In fact, the whole family was affected and took in one of the kids to hang out with the oldest Healey sibling, Joseph, and over the next few weeks the two boys became good friends.

The most startling memory of their time occurred when they were leaving Virginia Beach and had to say goodbye to a group of people and a cause that had won their hearts over. It was a sobering moment that cemented the need, but was not the moment of greatness. That moment was still to come.

Eventually the Healeys settled back down in Pittsburgh, but the experience of YES was still on their minds. A few visits back to Virginia and further discussions only deepened Joe's burden for the work being done there. The idea came up of moving to Virginia Beach to become more involved, and since the family proved through their motor home experience that it wasn't really important where a speaker lives, it was at least worth considering. After much discussion and prayer, Joe and his wife

Jill decided it was just too risky and had a handy list of reasons to back up their logic. What they didn't realize was that their moment had come and they were being watched.

They were being watched by their kids, especially by Joseph. A young man who had much to lose by switching cities and schools as a star quarterback, he confronted his dad one day with a question. "Are you making your decision based on fear or on what is the right thing to do?" A tough question from a tough kid in a tough moment.

A year-and-a-half ago the Healeys moved to Virginia Beach to be closer to the organization the whole family volunteers in. I called the director of YES, Harry Young, to find out what it has meant to him to have Joe and his family there. I was blown away by the level of commitment the whole Healey family has made.

The family regularly attends the showcases, which feature the young artists' works, contributes financially, and has scheduled a meeting with Harry to discuss even greater integration.

Joe has been instrumental in setting up key meetings with influential community leaders and has used his skills to become a great asset in strategy and planning. They are also working on the production of a video presentation to generate exposure and publicity among interested organizations. Furthermore, Joe helped them design and publish the curriculum materials used by the students at the center.

If you're looking for a reason why a professional speaker with a business to run would add the stress of moving a family to a new town just to serve as a volunteer, you have to look at his moment of greatness. We all have them. Let's hope we choose our path as wisely.

For an impressive Web site and story on Youth Entertainment Studios, please visit www.YesAmerica.org.

Manny Garza is an inspirational writer. He can be contacted by e-mail at mgarzajr@houston.rr.com.

Professional Speaker

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