A Game of Hope

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuxejhBOCOo
http://www.cbn.com/700club/guests/bios/Kris_Hogan021609.aspx

It was not your usual Friday night football game. In November 2008, Grapevine Faith Christian School, a 9-time state championship team, was playing Gainesville State School, a maximum security correctional facility for boys 12 to 19.

At Gainesville, the boys who are juniors and seniors in the facility have to earn the right to play football. Their ability to play is based on the fact that they have served half their sentence, they have no behavioral incidents and they have good grades. They have no cheerleaders and zero fans sit in the stands each game.

"We discovered when we were reassigned to a new district, that our week 10 game was Gainesville State School. Immediately, we looked at this as a ministry opportunity as soon as we saw it," said Coach Kris Hogan, athletic director for Grapevine Faith Christian School.

Grapevine Faith has a reputation in the community for winning numerous state championships in the last four years. They have a big following and lots of parental involvement. Kris decided to send an email to all of the parents in the school.

"I told them that we had an opportunity. I wanted to send a message to these Gainesville kids that they are just as important and valuable as any other kid on planet earth," Coach Hogan said. "And I wanted to affirm their good choices for them having earned the right to play football."

It would be the first time the two teams played each other. Gainesville State played other high school football teams in other districts, but no one ever cheered for them. So Coach Hogan asked the Grapevine parents to sit on the opposing side so the Gainesville team would have fans.

"In the case of the Gainesville kids, some don't even know their parents," Coach Hogan said. "And if they did, they couldn't come because technically they are incarcerated. These kids have never had anyone cheer for them."

Coach Hogan printed off a roster. "We cheered for them by name," he said. "We divided our cheerleaders in half and formed a 40-yard 'spirit' line. We treated them like it was their home game."

Normally, people look at the Gainesville kids as criminals. This time, the Gainesville kids saw love, and were filled with gratitude. "They had no idea what to do. They sprinted through the spirit line and were pumped up. They acted like they just played in the Super Bowl because people were loving on them," Coach Hogan said. Even though Faith beat Gainesville 33-14, the Gainesville kids were so happy that after the game they gave their head coach, Mark Williams, a sideline squirt of Gatorade, just as if he had won the state championship.

After the game, each boy was escorted back to their bus under the watch of 12 uniformed police officers. Each were handed a bag for the ride home: a burger, some fries, a soda, some candy, a Bible and an encouraging letter from a Faith player. The Gainesville coach grabbed Coach Hogan by the shoulders.
ABC's Person of the Week - Young Baseball Fan's Act of Generosity

Baseball fans are always hoping to catch the ball used during the game. So when Ian McMillan a 12-year-old gave his prized ball to a bathed in tears fellow fan he earned the respect and appreciation of sports fans across the world.

During a match between Arizona Diamondbacks against the Milwaukee Brewers, Ian reached out and got the ball of the game, but realizing the disappointment of a younger fan he walked back and gave him the so wanted prize.

His act of kindness was caught on camera, and Ian did not left the game empty handed, he was given a bat signed by his favorite player. During an interview with ABC News he said:

"I thought that was the right thing to do, I saw the kid, he was really sad, so I decided to give the ball back. If you do good things, good things happen to you."

Ian also got to thrown the first ball on the match against the Colorado Rockies and was named the person of the week by ABC News. The world could be a much better place if we thought and act such as Ian, don't you think?

A Victim Treats His Mugger Right

Julio Diaz recorded his story in New York City just days after he was mugged in the subway.

NPR, Morning Edition, March 28, 2008 · Julio Diaz has a daily routine. Every night, the 31-year-old social worker ends his hour-long subway commute to the Bronx one stop early, just so he can eat at his favorite diner.

But one night last month, as Diaz stepped off the No. 6 train and onto a nearly empty platform, his evening took an unexpected turn.

He was walking toward the stairs when a teenage boy approached and pulled out a knife.

"He wants my money, so I just gave him my wallet and told him, 'Here you go','" Diaz says.
As the teen began to walk away, Diaz told him, "Hey, wait a minute. You forgot something. If you’re going to be robbing people for the rest of the night, you might as well take my coat to keep you warm."
The would-be robber looked at his would-be victim, "like what’s going on here?" Diaz says. "He asked me, ‘Why are you doing this?’"

Diaz replied: "If you’re willing to risk your freedom for a few dollars, then I guess you must really need the money. I mean, all I wanted to do was get dinner and if you really want to join me ... hey, you’re more than welcome.

"You know, I just felt maybe he really needs help," Diaz says.

Diaz says he and the teen went into the diner and sat in a booth. "The manager comes by, the dishwashers come by, the waiters come by to say hi," Diaz says. "The kid was like, ‘You know everybody here. Do you own this place?’"

"No, I just eat here a lot," Diaz says he told the teen. "He says, ‘But you’re even nice to the dishwasher.’"

Diaz replied, "Well, haven’t you been taught you should be nice to everybody?"

"Yea, but I didn’t think people actually behaved that way," the teen said.

Diaz asked him what he wanted out of life. "He just had almost a sad face," Diaz says. The teen couldn’t answer Diaz — or he didn’t want to.

When the bill arrived, Diaz told the teen, "Look, I guess you’re going to have to pay for this bill ’cause you have my money and I can’t pay for this. So if you give me my wallet back, I’ll gladly treat you."
The teen "didn’t even think about it" and returned the wallet, Diaz says. "I gave him $20 ... I figure maybe it’ll help him. I don’t know."

Diaz says he asked for something in return — the teen’s knife — "and he gave it to me."

Afterward, when Diaz told his mother what happened, she said, "You’re the type of kid that if someone asked you for the time, you gave them your watch."

"I figure, you know, if you treat people right, you can only hope that they treat you right. It’s as simple as it gets in this complicated world."

What Deviance Means....

Read the article “A Victim Treats his Mugger Right.”

Deviance doesn’t have to be negative; you can violate the norms of society by doing something positive, such as paying for the toll of a stranger, offering to buy a stranger behind you to a cup of coffee, offering to carry a fellow student’s books/bag for no reason, writing a note to a teacher, thanking him or her for a lesson, selecting a person in your neighborhood or class who is feeling down and sending that person a greeting card anonymously, etc. Often, these acts are referred to as “random acts of kindness.”

Commit an act of positive deviance. (http://www.randomactsofkindness.org/kindness-ideas contains more than 100 ideas of random acts of kindness.)

Take your learning and your thoughts and respond in a well constructed expository essay. Here is your prompt: Explain the concept of positive deviance. How was Diaz’s response to the mugger an act of positive deviance? (paragraph 1) What act of positive deviance did you commit? Why would you qualify your act as positive deviance? (paragraph 2) How did others react to you? How did it make you feel? How has this experience influenced your thinking about norms and our culture? (paragraph 3)

Don’t wait for people to be kind; show them how. — Unknown

(You will be graded upon your ability to create a well constructed essay. Be sure to answer each of the questions and use plenty of support and elaboration to enhance your writing.)