

Taylor Swift: My Philanthropy Idol

When most people think of Taylor Swift, they imagine nothing more than bright, stage lights and pop-country music. Others don't see past her blonde curls and bold, red lipstick. However, anyone who actually takes the time to look a little closer can see that she has a heart of gold. From donating money to charity to spending the day with sick fans, Taylor has worked hard to uplift people and promote the welfare of others. Because of this, Taylor Swift is my philanthropy idol.

Taylor wanted to improve people's lives long before her career really took off. It seems that she has put a lot of effort into reaching out to young people from all over the world. In 2007, she launched a campaign to protect children from online predators. Only a year later, she donated her prom dress to *DonateMyDress.org*, a charity that encourages girls around the country to donate their used prom and special occasion dresses to those who cannot afford the cost of buying a dress for their prom, sweet 16, or other formal event. Only a few months later, she performed on BBC's Children in Need concert and donated money to the charity.

If I had to choose a main reason for choosing Taylor Swift as my philanthropy idol, the reason would be that she is incredibly loving and generous. Taylor seems to never stop giving. After hearing about the Tennessee floods in May, 2010, she donated \$500,000 during a flood relief telethon hosted by a Nashville television station. The following year, she raised over \$750,000 for victims of recent tornadoes in the southeast region of the United States. She also donated a signed guitar for the silent auction at a Wounded Warrior Project Benefit Dinner.

In my opinion, the most admirable thing that Taylor Swift does to uplift people is spend time with fans who are sick, physically or mentally disabled, or injured. She spent hours talking about Spider-Man and Star Wars with a six-year-old boy who had cancer. She also spent five hours visiting children with cancer in a hospital, even though she only planned to stay for an hour! In my opinion, none of these compare to what she did for Ronan Thompson's family. Ronan was a three year old, adorable, blue-eyed boy, with neuroblastoma, cancer that affects the abdomen, chest, neck, and areas near the spine. Only a few days before his fourth birthday, he passed away. His mother was left heartbroken, and created a website to honor him. Taylor saw the website, and she was deeply moved. She was so moved, in fact, that she decided to meet with Ronan's mother. Together, they co-wrote a song called, 'Ronan'. Taylor performed the song live on 'Stand Up to Cancer', a non-profit organization that raises money for cancer research. As if it wasn't heartbreaking enough to hear the ballad about the tragic loss of the little boy, it was very touching when Taylor left the stage in tears after singing the song.

I think that Taylor's actions are very inspiring. She puts a lot of time and hard work into making people happy, and she does it all with a smile on her face. I admire her way of connecting with people and always doing her best to help those in difficult situations. Taylor Swift has showed me that it doesn't have to take a lot to make someone's day. All of her acts of kindness show that our contributions, big or small, are extraordinary. She has inspired me to want to uplift people. Anyone can be a philanthropist, and I think that Taylor is definitely a good example of this.

Wyatt

Wyatt Eldridge

A Philanthropic Idol

To choose to be a philanthropist is to choose to make the greatest promise ever; the promise to love and to help humankind. A philanthropist takes other peoples' problems and concerns and makes them theirs too. Danny Thomas loved people so much that he not only made the promise to them, but also to a saint. To make a promise so big that it extends to one of the Lord's saints had to have taken much courage; the courage that does not come from overcoming fear, but the courage that comes from the heart. Danny Thomas had such a deep love of humankind and he believed in his abilities to help them. This is why I chose to share the amazing story of such a true philanthropist.

First, let us go behind the scenes of what started Danny's journey. About 70 years ago, Mr. Thomas was struggling financially with a baby on the way, yet he still placed his last \$7 in the collection box at his church. Through his struggle Danny started to pray to St. Jude Thaddeus and through his prayers, he became moderately successful as an entertainer. He was quoted praying, "Help me find my way in life, and I will make you a shrine." This is where his promise began.

Then, in the 1950's, after he became even more successful, Danny got together with some businessmen and friends to discuss what form his vow would take. The idea came; a children's hospital. After raising money, Danny, along with the businessmen, then created this research hospital with the purpose of curing catastrophic diseases in 1955. Then, to make things even better, ALSAC was formed in 1957 when it gained 100 Arab-American

representatives. ALSAC's sole purpose is to raise funds for St. Jude, the hospital which was rightfully named after the saint that Danny prayed to. Since then, ALSAC has become the second largest health care charity with more than 1 million volunteers.

In essence, Danny Thomas's life tale of fulfilling the greatest promise ever, being a philanthropist, has left a legacy. Danny had the vision and the passion of a real, all-in philanthropist, and through this, he completed his vow to humankind and to St. Jude Thaddeus. This man had such a deep concern for the well being of people, that even now, after death, he is still helping thousands of people every day with his children's hospital with the purpose of providing kids with the only thing stronger than the fear of dying, the hope that they will live. Thanks to Danny Thomas, my philanthropic idol, kids with cancer and other terrible diseases now have a place to go where they can find hope and comfort at St. Jude Children's Hospital.

Lexie Hunziker, P.4

A philanthropist that I look up to is Tom Ward.

St. Jude is a children's research hospital. It was founded by Danny Thomas back in 1962. Unlike other hospitals, St. Jude worries about treating the children, then worries about how to get the money later on. Every year for the last couple of years, he has been raising and donating money to the St. Jude children's research hospital.

Tom and my family recently traveled to Memphis, Tennessee. My mom, my sister, and Tom were going to tour the hospital. The tour guide told them about a family whose child that was diagnosed with cancer on Christmas Eve, and was at St. Jude on Christmas day. Tom came up with the idea of having a kick-a-thon, because it would be a great way for everyone to have fun and give at the same time.

The reason that I look up to Tom is because unlike other people, he isn't rich nor famous, but donates to make a difference. The other day, I saw that he had 16 plaques and one picture from St. Jude. One of them had a picture of a girl who was bald, and at the bottom it said something like, "thank you for donating".

Tom been donating to St. Jude since about 1996, and still continues to donate to this day. An estimated amount of money that he donates each year is about \$1500.

While most people in my class are writing about big celebrities, such as, Justin Bieber, Michael Jordan, etc. I chose to write about somebody who donates without all of the recognition.

Tom is my idol because what he does is he gives and gives, and he expects nothing in return. He told me that a reason why he wanted to donate to St. Jude and not somewhere else is because a higher percent of the money actually goes toward helping sick kids. Also, St. Jude is free to all people; they don't owe them any money.

Source: <http://www.stjude.org/history> - History about St. Jude