

## Kindness Returned



Photo by Joey McLeister,  
Star Tribune

David Gholar, a sophomore at Roosevelt High School in Minneapolis, spent part of his 16th birthday selling Urban Venture's CityKid Java at a Kowalski's supermarket so he can adopt a few families for the holidays. Rose Danielson, right, said it was "a great idea" and bought some. He has become something of a coffee expert.

A year ago, a family stepped in to help David Gholar and his family have a memorable Christmas. This year, David wants to return the gesture.

**By Pam Louwagie**, Star Tribune

December 10, 2007

The alarm clock blared for the fifth time and David Gholar had to force himself out from under the warm covers. It was early to be getting out of bed, especially for a teenager on a cold Saturday morning.

His mom was still asleep, tired from her waitress shift at a hotel bar. His brothers and sisters stayed tucked under blankets. David was bleary-eyed from a school dance the night before, but it was 8 a.m. and he had to get up. He had work to do.

He pulled on his jeans and a couple of T-shirts and plodded upstairs, where a small white Christmas tree stood in a big, empty living room.

Last year, a family had sent a mound of gifts to go under the tree, adopting David's family for the holidays. There were Ecco jeans and Nike Air Force 1 shoes. They had stocked the refrigerator with Cornish hens and all the fixings so his mom could cook a special dinner.

David remembered that day as he pulled on his coat. He wanted to make another family just as happy. He headed out the door.

To give another family that kind of Christmas, David, who just turned 16, needed to raise some money.

Mentors at Urban Ventures, a Minneapolis nonprofit that gets funds from the sale of CityKid Java coffee, helped him figure out a way to direct proceeds to his cause. B + W Specialty Coffee donated the first 100 bags.

And now, in his spare time, he sells -- to his teachers, to church-goers and, on that Saturday, to grocery shoppers.

"Hello ma'am, would you like to try some coffee?" he called out politely to a lady pushing a cart through a Minneapolis Kowalski's, his stand wedged between frozen foods and holiday candy. "I'm raising money so I can sponsor a family or two," he continued as she sipped. "A lot of kids in the neighborhood don't have much money ... I'm trying to give them a Christmas."

David, who has gone to youth programs nearly all of his life, has been selling the coffee with CityKid Java for a while, so he knows its characteristics.

The French Roast? It's like Sumatra, he told one customer, "but it's darker with, like, a rich taste of molasses."

Most of the shoppers bought a bag or two.

"He's doing more than just doing something nice," said shopper Lucretia Wells. "It sounds like he's prompted by internal motivation."

David often thinks back to last Christmas. What will it be like at his house this year?

He paused. "My family's gonna try," he said. "I asked my mom not to get me anything this year. ... My mom has a 6-year-old daughter and two babies."

His mother, Kimberly Hall, is single and has tried to teach her kids that Christmas isn't all about stuff.

"I've got six kids and I've never really been able to afford to splurge," she said, adding that she shops at garage sales and thrift stores. "I try to do stuff I know they'll use: house shoes, robes."

She might get a low-priced MP3 player if she can find one: "The iPod is not happening," she said.

Putting smiles on the faces of another family will make David feel good, and his mom is not surprised about that.

"David is a good kid. I'm hoping he keeps this up," she said.

He's hoping to raise \$1,000 or more before Christmas. For each family, chosen by Urban Ventures, he will ask the mother or father for a wish list with clothing sizes, toys and groceries for a Christmas dinner.

Then he and some friends will go shopping, picking out what's cool. His mother will pick out the groceries.

"Everybody looks for a way to feel warm inside for Christmas," he said. "I want them to know that their community is there for them."

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