

Another year has come and gone and now we face 2015. There can be something daunting about the year ahead. When I think about the future I sometimes get discouraged. After all, when you look around there's a lot to be discouraged about. I worry because many youth seem listless and directionless: sometimes rebellious. Their unemployment rate is alarmingly high. I fear that the veneer of civilization might be wearing thin. It is, after all, as thin as the transfer of values from one generation to the next.

It worries me to see many children in Humboldt who are homeless. A few of the children look like waifs out of a Dickens novel: their faces, instead of radiating hope, look despondent.

There are some who look and despair; others see a problem, and get to work seeking a solution. Yesterday, I saw a synergy of forces that gave me hope in terms of our youngsters and their future. Green Diamond President Douglas Reed, and Community Relations director Ruthann Schulte came to the Betty Kwan Chinn Center and presented Betty's Center with two checks: one for 20 thousand dollars to help educate local kids. The other grant for 15 thousand dollars was for Betty and her Staff to use as needed. ~~most likely the grant will provide meals for those who are hungry—it will help with other things as well.~~

Let's be honest, not everyone who is on the streets wants help getting off the streets. Some *do* want help; some do *not*. Does that mean we should help no one? I don't think so; After all, We've all received help somewhere. When you read the biographies of highly successful people, each of them received help from someone, at a crucial time. A "self-made man" is an oxymoron. But, if we are going to help in a strategic manner, we must be especially eager to help the young. Many of the children I have met through the programs of the Betty Chinn Center are as bright-eyed and bushy tailed as any. They are smart, eager to learn and respond favorably to affection and praise--just like the rest of us.

I borrow my conclusion from a commencement address by Admiral William H. McRaven, who spoke at the University of Texas at Austin last May 17. The University of Texas slogan is "What starts here changes the world." Picking up that theme, McRaven's speech went on for many minutes. Then he said conclusion: "To the ... class of 2014, you are moments away from graduating. Moments away from beginning your journey through life. Moments away from starting to change the world—for the better...It will not be easy... Find someone to help you through life. Respect everyone. Know that life is not fair and that you will fail often, but if you take some risks, step up when the times are toughest, face down the bullies, lift up the downtrodden and never, ever give up—if you do these things, then the next generation and the generations that follow will live in a world far better than the one we have today. And what started here will indeed have changed the world, for the better."

What I saw yesterday, between Green Diamond and Betty Kwan Chin was downright encouraging, because such cooperation *will* change the world for the better. 2015: Here we come!

This has been Dan Price for Community Comment