

This is Carole Crossley, Eureka Girl Scout leader with your community comment.

There is a TV commercial running that caused me to stop and take notice. A teen is talking about investing in the future and she isn't talking about stocks. She is talking about investing in our youth.

As a first grader at Cutten School back in the early 70's, I had my first experience being part of a group that regularly met, planned activities, camped, and of course, took turns taking home the coffee can to bring back full of snack the next week. I was thrilled to be part of a Girl Scout troop where I learned about respecting other's opinions and had an opportunity to lead on a small scale. When I earned a blue ribbon in the Girl Scout bakeoff in 4th grade, it was the first time I felt powerful. I was improving my skills as I reached each new level in the competition with the encouragement of my leader. I had no idea that all of those activities had adults behind the scenes. I didn't think about the parents that drove us places, mothers who cleaned the kitchen after failed baking attempts, or the leader who put in hours outside of our meetings to enhance our experience. I didn't know I was growing into a leader.

I also didn't know that there were dozens of youth organizations. Today, we have scouting, the fraternal Order of Rainbow for Girls, church youth groups, school clubs that contribute to the community. Rotary and Kiwanis sponsor Key Clubs and Interact. Kids that participate are the ones that you see cleaning parks, building kennels for the animal shelters, sending care packages to soldiers and a hundred other activities that not just keep them out of trouble, but develop a spirit of giving, an adventurous approach to life, and likely will end up as community servants in some capacity, be it career or volunteerism.

I am entering the 6th year with my Girl Scout troop of 18 in that same Cutten School Multi Purpose room where I ate snack from the coffee can. They are working on their Bronze Award, which requires a community Take Action project. After much research and deliberation, Operation Abby has been launched. Abby is a beautiful dog at the Humane Society. These 18 sixth graders have developed strategies to find Abby's forever family and I have no doubt they will succeed. They will succeed because they have been empowered by volunteers in their lives who have helped them find their power, develop their skills, and provided tools to accomplish their goals.

There are opportunities all around you to be one of those who supports and empowers our youth. They will be our elected officials, teachers, and our economic developers. How can you contribute? Look around. Encourage kids that you see trying new things. Praise their efforts and pitch in. We've got some amazing youth. You should get to know them. And I know 18 girls who would love to hear that you have visited Abby at the Humane Society.

This has been Carole Crossley, Eureka Girl Scout leader, for Community Comment.