

POVERTY JUST AROUND THE CORNER

I think that kids of my generation think too much about WANTING more, rather than thinking more about helping people that are NEEDING more.

This generation gives too little thought about those in need and instead of spending money on iPads and Kindles, why not spend a little money on donating to foodbanks and charities?

Many people think that there is no poverty where they live, so they don't need to worry about it, but actually a third of the UK's population has lived in poverty at some time between 2010 and 2013. The meaning of real poverty is when people don't have enough money to afford basic needs such as clothing, food and a simple shelter.

The beneficiary of my school's Harvest Festival was Harrow Foodbank. In 2016, 1,890 people in Harrow received emergency food parcels to last them 3 days. More than 47 tonnes of food were given out (that's about 47 thousand bags of sugar!) and 688 kids needed support from Harrow Foodbank. The foodbank is run by The Trussel Trust which also runs the largest network of foodbanks in the UK. In 2016 The Trussel Trust gave almost 1.2 million emergency food parcels. Considering the UK population is approximately 66 million people, that means that for every 66 people you meet, one may have had hunger rolling around their stomach for days.

Shortly after we collected for Harrow Foodbank, I contacted them for an interview so I could learn more. I was interested to know what inspired the volunteers there. One of them, Judy, said "Most people volunteer at Harrow Foodbank to help fight food poverty in the borough. Most of our volunteers find it very fulfilling knowing that they are helping real people in real need, who could be their neighbour, friend of family."

Usually a foodbank has volunteers who, in their own time, come and help pack all of the food into different boxes. I was a volunteer once. I went there with my mum, and it was really fun and felt good to be helping people. When all of the food is packed safely, it goes to the people in need.

At Harrow Foodbank, the food comes from ordinary people who are generous enough to give anything from a tin of beans upwards. You can also sometimes get toys and clothes from foodbanks. I asked Judy about how they know if someone is in need. She explained that they "work with many organisations in the borough to identify need." A list of those includes GPs, jobcentres where people go to find work and social services.

Anyone you see on a street, in a car, anywhere really, might have lived in poverty in his or her life. You probably don't know who they are, where they came from or

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their past. You do know that they *might* have lived in poverty. It's time you opened your eyes and your hearts up to the people living around you.