

STYLE AND SERVICE GO HAND IN HAND FOR ONE VOLUNTEER

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TALIA TSIPRAS (LEFT), FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF GOOD THREADS, HOLDS UP A DRESS.

Talia Tsipras always knew her best style inspiration was close to home. For many years, her beloved grandmother worked as a clothing designer. When she retired, she was left with a warehouse filled with unused pieces. This was during the COVID-19 pandemic, when students like Talia were struggling to engage in an increasingly disconnected world. Looking to do something good for others in her community, Talia partnered with Catholic Guardian Services and donated a few hundred dresses to the organization. But Talia knew she could go bigger, and that catapulted her story into a fashion revolution.

Wanting to do more to combine her knowledge of the fashion business with her passion for helping people, Talia established Good Threads, an organization that makes new clothing gifts to children, teens, and women in crisis. While Talia knew used clothing had great value, she felt there was something special in treating people with something new. The organization buys new clothing by the pallet at the end of the season from large discount retailers like Ross and Marshalls, therefore securing substantial discounts. Good Threads then partners with organizations around the country that are already serving communities, allowing them to distribute the clothing quickly to communities in need. From a public school system in Texas to groups like Suited for Change in Washington, D.C., Good Threads has provided more than 1000 teens with brand new prom dresses and around 800 children with clothing gifts. Their contributions exceed a retail value of \$300,000.

In her role as Good Threads' Founder and Executive Director, Talia spends around 40 hours per month on duties ranging from fundraising and sourcing new clothing to filling program orders and packing and shipping clothes to their partner organizations. That's no small feat, considering she's a rising high school senior with a rigorous academic schedule on her hands. Talia also feels her ADHD has transformed from a struggle to a superpower in this situation. Instead of limiting her ability to focus on the task at hand, Talia believes she utilizes the common neurodevelopmental condition to her advantage.

Talia's commitment to volunteerism is a powerful example of taking one's specialized knowledge and using it to help others. Talia already saw her grandmother's success in the fashion industry, and knew she could channel that expertise into a life of service. Her vision is a triumph that can inspire anyone hoping to serve others.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO GET STARTED WITH THIS INITIATIVE?

My grandmother inspired me. She used to be a fashion designer, and she designed so many beautiful dresses. When she retired, we had these big warehouses full of unused dresses that were so beautiful, but weren't being used at all. It was during COVID, and it was a really hard time for everyone, especially kids in high school. I just thought this was an easy way for me to make a difference in the community. We partnered with Catholic Guardian Services and grew organically from there. We distributed about 100 dresses to girls throughout New York so we could give a special experience for prom.



TALIA TSIPRAS IS THE FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF GOOD THREADS.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU TO VOLUNTEER?

It gives me a feeling of joy. Whenever I get a lot of photos back after we distribute clothing gifts, I can see the smile on people's faces and the reactions to me doing a small thing to help them. It makes me feel really warm and fuzzy inside. I also struggle with ADHD, and taking action helps with the ADHD the most.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR VOLUNTEER ROLE WITH GOOD THREADS.

We have people reach out to us. For example, we just did our usual prom dress donations. They tell us sizes they need. Then we head to the warehouse and gather the different dresses based on a variety of colors and sizes. We collect them and put them together. We collect the items that they ask for and then ship them ourselves. The nonprofit gives it to the end user.

WHAT ARE YOUR LONG-TERM PLANS OR GOALS FOR THE ORGANIZATION?

I want to keep expanding the program. We currently serve nonprofits in eight different states, but I want to expand to more, especially since I'm going into my senior year. I'm going to go into college, but I still want to keep this going, even if I'll be away from home. I'd love to see this become a national organization and maybe build some brand partnerships and get grants.

WHAT'S BEEN THE MOST REWARDING PART OF YOUR WORK?

I've had a lot of people tell me they have great ideas for nonprofits but never go out there and create them. I'm very proud of myself for actually starting it. I just like helping people, and I love seeing how much a gift can help a person, how much dignity they can get from a gift, and how much we can uplift people.



GOOD THREADS FOUNDER TALIA TSIPRAS SMILES FOR THE CAMERA BEHIND GARMENT BAGS.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR OTHERS TO GET INVOLVED WITH CAUSES THEY CARE ABOUT?

It's the little things. If we each got involved with things we care about, then as a greater good, we will all transform things together. Humans are social creatures. We need community, and by needing community, you need to help your community.

ANY ADVICE FOR PEOPLE WHO WANT TO START VOLUNTEERING?

Just do it! Just take action and figure it out along the way, especially for young people. Don't overthink it. It's one foot in front of the other. Just get it going, and then it will grow. You'll see it grow and get easier in the process. That's what happened to me. Also, be completely open to everything. Be open to different opportunities, and eventually you will evolve.

WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO LEARN FROM YOUR STORY?

Take action and figure it out along the way. I want other people to be inspired by what I do, and hopefully, more things like this will rise. We started small, and small things can make such a big impact. Another big thing is how gifts can equal dignity. It's a big difference between giving someone something used versus giving a new clothing gift. It helps people to be seen, and with a new gift, it grants people dignity.

Do you want to make a difference in your community like Talia? Find local volunteer opportunities.

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