

# Teens Using Social Media for Good Deeds

by Smart Social

[1] There's so much bad publicity these days about teens and social media. Cyberbullying, inappropriate postings on social networking sites, and apps that put teens in bad situations tend to make headlines. But there are also students out there using social media in positive ways — sometimes wonderful, life-changing ways that show you're never too young to make a difference.

[2] We found some teens using social media for good deeds and worthy causes that we want to share with our readers. Get ready to be inspired.

## Teen creates a collaborative<sup>1</sup> website to share stories and inspire others

[3] Gray created her first blog, "Wondermint Kids," when she was 8 years-old. It was meant for friends and family, but eventually was watched by over 150,000 followers. Now a teen, she created Girl Folk for girls (guys are welcome, too) like her, interested in art, music, fashion, reading, food, and travel from a girl's perspective.

[4] The teens work really hard and inspire girls from around the world to turn in stories on mental health, self-care, travel, cooking and more. The website's main teen writers live on the remote and rural<sup>2</sup> island of Orcas off the coast of Washington State and work with girls from Australia, the United States, and France. The company is now a non-profit and is run by girls, for girls.

## Blogging<sup>3</sup> in middle school and helping others earned teens local hero status

[5] In middle school, Michael and Marc started using social media to promote their baseball blogs about the Boston Red Sox and New York Mets. In an effort to inspire his peers to never give up and pursue their dreams, Michael also wrote about athletes and how they would overcome their challenges. Marc wrote about living with food allergies and getting used to that as a kid for others struggling with the same issues.

[6] Because of their blogging experience in middle school, Michael and Mark learned how to gain visibility<sup>4</sup> on social media and then created a program called Teenager Entrepreneur. This program is a personal and business empowerment program that teaches students how to gain confidence, conquer fears, and find their passion. They offered this program to other adolescents, created a non-profit 501C3<sup>5</sup> to get grants, and have offered scholarships to children for the past five years.

### Paragraphs 1 - 2

1. What is the author's opinion about the bad publicity surrounding teens and social media?

- A. People don't pay enough attention to it.
- B. It is leading to a decline in social media use.
- C. It makes people ignore the positive side of social media.
- D. People should protest against the social media companies.

### Paragraphs 3 - 4

2. How does this section support the author's point of view that social media can be used for good?

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<sup>1</sup> Collaborative (adjective): created by more than one person working together

<sup>2</sup> countryside

<sup>3</sup> contributing to an information or discussion website

<sup>4</sup> the presence or popularity an account has on social media

<sup>5</sup> a type of charitable organization that doesn't have to pay taxes

[7] The program was held at Fordham University for the first four years and now they travel to schools to empower students.

[8] The New York Knicks granted them the Sweetwater Clifton ‘City Spirit’ Award which pays tribute to local heroes who have made a significant difference in the lives of others.

[9] The award is named in honor of the late Knicks great Nat “Sweetwater” Clifton, who was the first African-American to play for the Knickerbockers. Recipients of this award epitomize<sup>6</sup> the same trailblazing characteristics of the Knicks Legend. It all started with using social media in a positive manner and empowering their peers to do the same.

### Teen motivates people of all ages to identify their passion and take action

[10] If there’s such a thing as a social-media prodigy,<sup>7</sup> Hannah Alper is it.

[11] Hannah, who is from Toronto, launched her blog “Call Me Hannah” when she was just nine years old. Her father, Eric Alper, says Hannah’s passion for speaking out about important causes started early on with her love of animals, which quickly spread to concern for threatened habitats and the environment as a whole.

[12] Fast forward four years, and Hannah, now 13, has not only built a huge following for her blog but gained influence through public speaking and much more. She has 34,000 followers on Twitter, writes for *The Huffington Post*,<sup>8</sup> and serves as both a Me to We Motivational Speaker<sup>9</sup> and Free the Children Ambassador.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, her advocacy<sup>11</sup> has expanded to also include anti-bullying efforts and celebrating other young role models, including Malala Yousafzai.

[13] Hannah goes by a lot of descriptions, from eco-warrior to “kindraiser.” And if you want to know what kindraising is, here it is in Hannah’s own words from one of her *Huffington Post* blogs: “Kindraising is all about changing our communities and the world through kindness. I believe that it takes more than money to create a lot of change that we’re working on and that compassion, empathy, and kindness play a huge part in reaching our goal.”

### Teen helps disadvantaged children play sports

[14] Competitive cheerleader Jah’Kiyla Atwaters of Boynton Beach, Florida was practicing cheerleading routines at a park when she noticed some girls outside the gate watching. When Jah’Kiyla encouraged them to try cheering themselves, one of them responded, “My mom died, and my sister is taking care of us. She doesn’t have any extra money for me to cheer.”

[15] Saddened by the story, Jah’kiyla told her mom, and together they formed the Jump with Jah’kiyla (JWJ) Foundation to provide children who normally couldn’t afford it the opportunity to play sports. They created a website to encourage donations and to help kids and their families apply for sports vouchers. Jah’kiyla also

### Paragraphs 5 - 9

3. What does the author’s use of the words **promote**, **inspire**, and **empower** suggest about how they view social media?

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### Paragraphs 10 - 13

4. Which word best describes the author's tone when describing Hannah: **impressed**, **disapproving**, or **accepting**? What does this word tell us about how the author views teens and social media?

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<sup>6</sup> **Epitomize** (*verb*): to be a perfect example of

<sup>7</sup> **Prodigy** (*noun*): a person, typically a young one, who has an exceptional talent for something

<sup>8</sup> an American website blog that collects and presents links to related news stories

<sup>9</sup> a company that sells lifestyle products, leadership training and travel experience

<sup>10</sup> Free the Children is now known as WE Charity, an organization that implements development programs in Asia, Africa and Latin America, focusing on education, water, health, food and economic opportunity. It also runs programming for young people in Canada, the U.S. and U.K., to participate in service learning and active citizenship.

<sup>11</sup> **Advocacy** (*noun*): public support for a cause

launched a social media campaign asking kids to create and photograph themselves with posters of their favorite sport.

[16] The website BlackCelebrityGiving<sup>12</sup> highlighted the JWW Foundation in 2014, noting, "The urge to help others and her outgoing personality led Jah'Kiyla to where she is today."

**Conclusion**

[17] As parents and educators, it might be tough to see the positive side of social media sometimes. But for some teens, it's not all about finding the best filter for selfies or the latest viral video challenge. These young people are certainly shining examples about the positivity that can be found online.

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**Paragraphs 14 - 17**

5. How does the example of Jah'Kiyla Atwaters support the author's point of view?

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<sup>12</sup> a site that reports on celebrity philanthropy, nonprofit organizations and causes that directly correlate with the black community

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer the questions.

\_\_\_\_\_ **1.** What is the author’s overall purpose for writing this article?

- A. to show that social media is a mix of websites, apps, and blogs
- B. to persuade social media companies to do more to protect teens
- C. to disprove the belief that teens only use social media in negative ways
- D. to support the idea that teens should only use social media if they are supervised

**2.** In the article, the author explores the positive impact of social media.

Do you agree with the author’s point of view? Do you think social media is more good than bad? Explain.  
Use evidence from the article and your own life to support your point of view.

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