

Pass It On®...

Crafting Relationships.

10-year-old Alfie works in the woodworking shop with his grandfather, crafting high-end chopping boards. Selling items out of the garage, the duo are building their relationship — and a brighter future.

It seems the world has gotten much smaller for the new generation of children. With access to world news streaming on smartphones and becoming the focus of discussions in classrooms, kids like Alfie are well aware of the problems other kids face around the world. Fortunately, that also inspires kids like Alfie to do something about it.

In Africa, the lack of clean water is directly related to the high poverty rate. Over 400 million people live below the poverty line in Africa. Without access to clean water, children are often the water gatherers in the village, walking upwards of six miles a day to water sources. This leaves little time for school, and because the water is unclean, kids are often sick. Thus, having clean water close to home has a compounding effect on families and communities.

So when Alfie, a 10-year-old in England, started making money with his grandfather, he knew what he wanted to do with it. “I want to build water sources for people in Africa,” he says.

Alfie grew up in a football-crazy family. His brothers are big fans of the Chelsea football club. But Alfie has a different interest: He loves being in the shop with his grandfather.

He began hanging out at age 4. “I have Wednesdays and Sundays off,” says Grandfather Roy, a barber by trade. “Alfie’s brothers are all sporty, and Alfie was getting left behind, so I wanted to offer him another avenue.”

Alfie is a fast learner. While Grandpa works with the heavy machinery, Alfie provides the finishing touches, carefully sanding and prepping for oiling. Each piece holds the secrets of generations, the hardworking set that built a new world and the younger that sees the world as part of their family.

The generations are coming together even more metaphorically over a project coming to them from

Oxford College: A large tree that stood for many years fell in a storm. The college asked Roy and Alfie if they would craft items from the wood as a remembrance. The work will take a fair bit of their time, shaping and finishing pieces with a historical connection to the community, a community that sends graduates out into the world to make a difference.

Many graduates from Oxford go on to make an impact in Africa. It’s only fitting that they carry with them a keepsake from a young boy with a sensitive heart, and a grandfather with labor-hardened hands to remind them that positive change takes both.

Beyond Alfie’s aspirations to make a difference in the lives of people across the world, their work will endure for another, timeless reason. Grandfathers have a special place in their grandchildren’s lives. They provide the wisdom of experience, and the experience of time spent slowly. In a hurry-up world, isn’t that exactly what all of us need?

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