

July 27, 2016

Dear Chief Werner,

I wanted to let you know about an amazing incident that occurred recently in our community. My 14-year-old son, Paul, decided to start a neighborhood lawn mowing business to pay for his Boy Scout High Adventure trip. To help him haul his lawn mowing equipment around, his grandfather in southern Minnesota designed and built him a one-of-a-kind cart that featured easy loading of the lawnmower, a rack for his trimmer and broom, and a collapsible handle. A lot of our neighbors thought that it was pretty cool and often commented on it.

A couple of weeks ago, Paul was mowing a lawn in our neighborhood near the busy intersection of County Road 30 and Juneau Lane, when he realized that he needed to run back home two blocks away to pick up a fully charged battery pack for his trimmer. When he came back, his lawn mower was where he left it, but his cart from his grandfather was gone. He was very upset. We tried to calm him down while explaining that some life lessons are hard to learn, and that you just can't leave belongings sitting on the side of a busy public road. In a bitter tone, Paul said that he had "lost faith in people" in our community. We helped him make posters of the missing cart, which he posted throughout the neighborhood, and he filed a report with the Maple Grove Police Department. He had a good experience talking to a really nice officer named Dave Goggins. Then, a week later, we came home one evening and found a brand new home-made cart in our front yard. Attached to it was a card from Officer Goggins that said, "Paul, hopefully this will help you out with your lawn business. Take care!" We couldn't believe it! I almost had to pick my jaw up off the ground! Paul was not only thrilled, but amazed!

Apparently after Paul's call to the station the week before, Officer Goggins was talking to the dispatcher about how he felt sorry for a kid trying to start a lawn mowing business and then having his cart go missing. That weekend Officer Goggins made a really nice cart out of some lumber he had from a project, as well as new tires, a sturdy handle and a quality paint job. I still can't believe it myself! On a beautiful summer weekend, Officer Goggins took his own time, money, energy and effort to build this cart out of the goodness of his heart! Not only will this generous gift be a great help to Paul, but more importantly, it has taught him a great lesson about compassion, charity and service, and how those qualities are embodied in the officers in our community who chose a career of serving and protecting others every day.

So often it's the tragedies that grab the headlines, but less often reported are the everyday acts of service and compassion by the men and women like Officer Dave Goggins whose thoughtful act of kindness touched the heart of a 14-year-old boy.

Sincerely,


Bob Kochenderfer