

In our new series, you'll meet teens just like you who are doing amazing things. Read their stories and be inspired to change the world—and achieve your dreams!



There have to be a million other people like me who don't have the means to give a lot but want to help. What if we all collaborated?

## Inspired Like You

You'd drop \$2 on a bag of chips. Why not use it to help someone?



# Julien

## is changing the world with \$2

By asking people to contribute just a couple of bucks each, Julien, 16, has raised more than \$40,000 for those in need.

BY JULIEN LEITNER, AS TOLD TO JANE BIANCHI

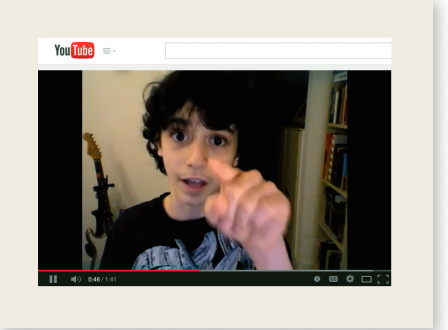
One of my earliest memories is from when I was 2 years old. My parents had taken me to visit a local homeless shelter in Portland, Oregon. I asked my mom, "Do these people not have food?" She said, "They don't." I said, "Are there a lot of people who don't have food? Like 100?" (One hundred was the biggest number that I could think of then!) She said, "Yes." My mind was blown.

From that moment on, I realized that all the stuff that had seemed normal to me—like having food on the table, a bed to sleep in, and

a roof over my head—can be a real struggle for others.

In middle school, I began volunteering. We'd assist teachers at daycares with **underprivileged** kids or go shopping for senior citizens. I loved how it felt to help those in need and see them smile.

So as my bar mitzvah approached (that's a Jewish celebration of a boy's 13th birthday), I wanted to commemorate my "coming of age" by giving back in an even bigger way. But the question kept nagging me: How the heck was I going to do that?



I asked for donations on YouTube—15,000 people have seen the video!

I come from a middle-class family, so I knew that I couldn't just make an enormous donation. I had to be creative. And in sixth grade, it hit me. I thought: There have to be a million other people like me. What if we all collaborated?

I decided that asking people to donate \$2 each



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to a worthwhile charity was a reasonable goal. People spend two bucks on a bag of chips, so why wouldn't they spend two bucks to help change the world? If 1 million people did that, we'd collect \$2 million!

### STARTING FROM SCRATCH

I spent the next year and a half figuring out how to turn my dream into a reality. There was so much work to do! My parents introduced me to a woman who helped me publicize my organization through social media and the press. And my uncle

happened to know a Web designer who put my site together for free.

Next, to give people **incentive** to donate, I decided to record my own rap song and give the MP3 as a donation gift. The song is called "Fight for a Cause," and the message is: Stop spending your time doing nothing. Fight for what is important to you.

I also had to figure out which charity the donations would benefit. I decided that I'd choose three and let the donors vote for their favorite.

But there was still something missing. I had

to come up with a catchy name for my organization. I thought back to the fifth grade, when I was studying levers. I remembered a quote by a Greek physicist named Archimedes, who once said, "Give me a lever long enough and a place to stand, and I can move the Earth."

I thought: That's exactly what I'm trying to do. My organization could be the place to stand, all the people coming together could form the lever, and together, we could move the Earth. So I named my organization the Archimedes Alliance. Pretty awesome, right?



Go here to donate!



### 3 Things Julien Wants You to Know

- 1 FOLLOW THROUGH.** I'll get e-mails from people that say, "Your organization is amazing!" But those same people don't donate or follow the Archimedes Alliance on social media. If you feel strongly about something, don't just talk about it—*be* about it. Take the extra step and prove it with your actions.
- 2 GO AFTER YOUR DREAM.** Don't let anyone tell you that your goal is impossible to reach. I heard someone once say: "I'd rather be someone who regrets doing something than someone who regrets not doing something." I live by that.
- 3 BE YOURSELF.** I think of myself as different. I started my own organization. I rap. I play the violin. I play basketball. Individuality is important. Do the things that you love, and don't worry about trying to fit in. Then your friends will like you for who you are and not for some act that you're putting on.

### SEEING RESULTS

Finally, in the summer before eighth grade, my bar mitzvah arrived. It was time for the big reveal! I gave a speech, and lots of people donated on the spot. I felt so proud and excited.

Then I sent an e-mail to everyone I knew and who my parents knew, letting them know how to donate. I have to admit, I was seriously disappointed. Few people donated and even fewer passed along my message. I realized: This is going to be way harder than I thought. But I was determined. So I kept sending e-mails, talking about my project, and tweeting to spread the word.

Over time, donations

started to add up, and the Archimedes Alliance eventually raised \$40,101.60, which we donated to the charity that got the most votes, Outreach International. It's an organization that works to end poverty. They were thankful for the massive donation, and I felt giddy. I couldn't believe what I had accomplished! Now we're on round two of fundraising.

I'm going to keep at this until I reach my goal of raising \$2 million. One thing I've learned is that no matter how bad of a situation you're in, every single person has the power to make a difference and help someone else. So why not join the movement and chip in two bucks? Together, we can move the Earth. •



I have a Gordon Setter named Django, who is missing a toe on his left foot. He's named after the musician Django Reinhardt.

I love to play and watch basketball. I like that it's a group effort: The team that works best together wins.



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