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MAN ON THE MOON
Grades 4-6
Grades 2-3
Grades K-1

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NATIONAL NEWS

June 5, 2009

She's Changing the World



Maggie Doyne receives top honors at the 2009 Do Something Awards for her work with children in Nepal

By Vickie An

The summer after Maggie Doyne graduated from high school, she decided to spend a year traveling the world before she started college. The journey changed her life and the lives of hundreds of orphaned children forever.



In 2006, Doyne took a backpacking trip through the Himalaya Mountains in the war-torn country of Nepal, in Asia. She met a slew of orphaned children. Having grown up comfortably in Mendham, New Jersey, Doyne was shocked to see so many kids living on the streets. She wanted to do something about it. So, Doyne used her savings of \$5,000 in babysitting money to buy an acre of land in the village of Surkhet. Then, she built the kids a home, the Kopila Valley Children's Home.

Now, the Do Something foundation is doing something for Doyne. The youth organization provides resources and support for teens that want to make a difference in the world. On Thursday night, the foundation named Doyne the \$100,000 grand-prize recipient of the 2009 Do Something Award.

A Life-Altering Trek



The Kopila Valley Children's Home officially opened its doors in 2008. Doyne, now 22 years old, currently cares for 26 kids at the home. She has helped more than 700 other orphans find families. She also runs an outreach program that provides scholarships for needy families to send their children to school. The children at the home learn basic skills such as sewing and cooking. They also grow their own food in their garden and raise farm animals.

Doyne admits that she didn't have it all figured out when she first arrived in Nepal. "I just felt that there was something there for me," she told TFK. She settled on building a children's home after speaking with the community about what they needed. Doyne says that her parents were supportive of her mission. But it was a challenge to convince other adults that an 18-year-old girl could accomplish such a big project. Still,



Doyne never gave up on fund raising. In just over a year, she had enough money to build her dream home.



Seeing the finished project was emotional for Doyne. "It doesn't feel real sometimes," she says. "Even moments when all the kids are sitting at the table for breakfast, or they're happy and all dancing . . . it's the best feeling in the world."

The Best of the Best

Each year, Do Something presents five of the most outstanding youth leaders in the world with \$10,000 for their service work. The public then votes on which of those five winners should receive the \$100,000 grand prize.

Doyne and the four other finalists were honored on Thursday night at the historic Apollo Theater in New York City. *High School Musical's* Corbin Bleu hosted the special event. There were performances by pop/rock group Boys Like Girls and Akon. The rapper's Konfidence Foundation works with underprivileged youth in Africa.



R&B star Usher Raymond received the Do Something Celebs Gone Good civic leader award for his charity, Usher's New Look. The organization helps disadvantaged kids from tough neighborhoods get the skills they need to be successful, whether they want to be music moguls or marketing experts. "Service is raw energy," Raymond said in his acceptance speech. "When you put it in the hands of youth, it becomes power. You can make a difference no matter what age you are."



Finally, it was time for the biggest award of the night. The audience hushed as VH1 President Tom Calderone announced the Do Something grand-prize winner. Doyne ran across the stage and jumped into Calderone's arms. In a tearful speech, Doyne dedicated the award to a young girl that lived in the home who recently passed away from cancer. She also revealed plans to build a school and community center with the grant money she had just won.

"Sometimes making somebody's dream come true is a "yes" away," Doyne told the crowd. "This all started as a "yes" from my mom and dad, who let me backpack around the world. We all have the ability to say yes to somebody and make their dreams come true."



The Power of Youth



Actor Andrew Shue and his childhood friend Michael Sanchez founded the Do Something organization in 1993. Their dream was to create an online community that would inspire, support and celebrate teenagers who wanted to make change. These youths would see the problems in the world, believe that they could solve them and then take action. Do Something would provide the tools and resources to help make it happen.

Sixteen years later, Shue and Sanchez's vision has empowered millions of young people to get involved in their communities. The organization works with more than 500 school clubs across the United States, Puerto Rico and Canada. The groups tackle all kinds of causes, including human rights issues, poverty, bullying and education.