

Eli's HELPING Hands

By Rebecca Rice Birkin
(Based on a true story)

"There is plenty indeed for my two hands to do" (Children's Songbook, 272).

It was Saturday morning, and Eli was crouched in the goal box, ready to pounce. He jumped and dove, doing his best to keep the football out of the net. But it was hard! Then right before the end of the game, the ball slid past his hands. The other team had scored! Eli's team had lost. He was so sad.

The next day at church, Eli walked slowly to his Primary class, still feeling glum.

Eli saw his friend Kate outside the classroom. Kate's mom pushed Kate's pink wheelchair inside. She hugged Kate before leaving to go to her own class.

"Hi, Kate," Eli said.

Kate couldn't answer or wave back, but she always looked right into Eli's eyes so he knew she heard him.

Usually Kate smiled when Eli said hello, but not today. *Is Kate sad?* Eli wondered. *I know what that feels like.* He still felt sad that he hadn't stopped the other team from scoring the winning goal.

Eli sat by Juan and Makell as Sister Young started class. Then Kate whimpered. Sometimes it was hard for Kate to sit still because her body hurt.



"Kate, are you hurting today?" Sister Young asked.

Kate started to cry.

"Maybe a Primary song will help," Sister Young said.

The class started to sing. Kate loved music. Usually she sang along by making happy sounds. But today, Kate just cried.

How can we help Kate feel better? Eli wondered.

Then an idea popped into his mind. "I know!" Eli told Sister Young. "I'll push Kate's wheelchair a little bit."

Eli had seen how Kate's mom gently pushed her chair when Kate needed to feel better. He hurried over to Kate and started rocking her wheelchair slowly back and forth.

Kate stopped crying.

"Can I have a turn?" Juan asked.

"Me too!" Makell said.

As Sister Young taught the lesson, Eli and his friends took turns pushing Kate's wheelchair. Kate smiled. The whole room seemed brighter.

By the end of class, everyone was smiling.

"Helping Kate makes me happy,"

Eli said.

"I'm glad," said Sister Young. "It makes



Heavenly Father happy too. He loves Kate and wants her to feel better. Sometimes we get to be His helpers."

Eli looked at Kate. "You help me too," he told her. "Every time you smile."

Kate grinned.

As Eli headed home from church, he felt as warm as a football field on a sunny summer day. *Maybe I can't catch all the footballs,* he thought. *But I can still use my hands to help people.* ●

The author lives in Utah, USA.



"Through our heartfelt kindness and service, we can make friends with those whom we serve."

President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Finding Joy through Loving Service," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2011, 48.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MELISSA MANWILL