

Mansfield's Orion Jean says anyone can make change happen



MISD student Orion Jean loves doing charity work, lots of it, and for his efforts that included bringing 100,000 meals to folks and more, he was named Time Magazine's Kid of the Year. Photo by Kherri Jean

Helping others should have no limit.

Orion Jean is proof that age is just a number. And the number for him is unlimited, as in he believes helping others should have no limits.

For this kind of thinking – and implementation – the 11-year-old sixth-grader from Mansfield's Alma Martinez Intermediate School was selected as TIME Magazine's 2021 Kid of the Year. The announcement was made recently on Nickelodeon's Kid of the Year TV special.

"Whether you're 10, 11 or 97, it doesn't matter. If you have an idea, something you really want to change, if you set your mind to it you can make that change happen," said Orion, who was selected from more than 5,000 nominees for his community service campaigns that have helped people in need and inspired others to join his crusade for kindness along the way.

"A lot of people have thoughts and ideas but going out and making it a reality is the difference between thinkers and doers."

Race To Kindness Campaign

For almost two years, beginning when was still attending the Eagle Mountain Saginaw School District, Orion has been working to make life a little better for others through his Race to

Kindness Campaign. Through it he led the charge to collect and distribute 100,000 meals to food-insecure families, toys to children in local hospitals and books for kids who didn't have any at home.

In a Zoom interview aired during the TV special, Jean told actress and human rights activist Angelina Jolie his philosophy is, "If you see a problem, fix it."

He said he felt a kinship to the Oscar-winning actress and even had a chance to talk about their love of helping others off-camera.

"She seemed down to earth and grounded," Orion said. "It was really awesome to see, with her power – she could just act and go home – but she uses her position to make a difference."

Likewise, he got to meet comedian Trevor Noah, host of "The Daily Show" and the host of the Nickelodeon TV special, available on Nick.com, Nick App and Nick On Demand. "He's funny, charming and vibrant, and he understands what it means to be kind as well," Orion said.

Setting An Example For Others, No Matter Their Age

Martinez Principal Lea Boiles said it is an honor to have Orion at her school, calling him a strong student who exudes leadership that sets an example for students and adults alike.

"In a world that causes us to often fear what the future will look like, Orion reminds me that young people like him, who have a heart for humanity, will be the foundation of great things moving forward," Boiles said.

As TIME's Kid of the Year, Orion will be featured on the cover of TIME and in more coverage in "TIME for Kids." Each of the five Kid of the Year honorees will receive a cash prize and have the opportunity to serve as a kid reporter for TIME for Kids with exclusive access to a Nickelodeon event.

"I'm very excited. I'm not only a big reader, but I love to write," Orion said of the reporting opportunity.

In fact, he is a published author. His first book is entitled "A Kids Book About Leadership," naturally. It is available through <https://akidsco.com/> "To truly be a leader, you have to be confident in yourself and your own abilities," he said.

Just The Beginning

Orion's mother, Kherri Jean, said that while everyone else recently got the news, Orion and his family have known of his honor since December – a secret she admits was hard to keep, but they did. "What a thing to have to hold onto," she said with a chuckle, adding about the honor, "It's not about him, per se – though he is very special – but what he's trying to get into the world. And, of course, we are so very proud of him."

Orion's cash prize for winning was \$5,000. Of course, he plans to use it to help others, he said.

"I like to think this is just the beginning, but even if it all ends here, I'm blessed," he said. "But I have a lot more I'd like to do."

Source:

Mauch, Rick. "Mansfield's Orion Jean Says Anyone Can Make Change Happen." *Focus Daily*

News, 14 Feb. 2022, www.focusdailynews.com/mansfields-orion-jean-says

[-anyone-can-make-change-happen/](http://www.focusdailynews.com/mansfields-orion-jean-says-anyone-can-make-change-happen/). Accessed 6 Apr. 2022.