

If I Were Mayor

I am only an eighth grader. Sure. But if I was mayor, I would have a lot of plans.

If I were mayor, I would start with creating a community program to help with seniors. Teens and young adults would help their senior neighbors with everyday tasks like yard work, meal cooking/planning, grocery shopping, and household chores. Teens would sign up, giving a few details about their skills and strengths. They would then be matched with an elderly neighbor within five miles of their house. The senior would have a need that matches well with their teen's strengths. If a teen had limited time, commitment level, or other scheduling conflict, they would be matched with someone who does not need help as often, and be there to help out as needed (maybe the teen's match had a tree branch fall in their yard, and needed help cleaning it up). I believe this program would be beneficial for both the youth and their match. Many teens and young adults feel uncomfortable talking to the elderly, but it is a lifelong skill that needs to be learned. Helping out around the elderly's house would help them feel more comfortable, and the seniors may be able to stay out of care facilities if they have an extra set of hands.

I would also create a program at our library to support local authors. The library should be a safe space for authors to share their works, where they can get support and encouragement from fellow authors and the public. This is a place that would host book launches, invite local authors to get together with their peers and write, but most importantly help the community get involved with the very people that write books the community loves! This will help not only the local authors, but may spark the imagination of a community member to start writing, too. When I was nine, my mom asked me what I wanted to do when I grew up. When I said write, she immediately wanted to let me speak with an author to learn about it, and to meet someone doing what I longed to do. And yet, I still have not had that talk with an author. I believe this is not because of a lack of Oregon authors, but because there is little community for them to share their works in. How many authors are there, writing but not sharing? Or not writing, because they *can't* share?

If I were mayor, these would be my first ideas. Notice they both involve community. If we do not have a community to come alongside us in everything we do, if we do not have people to fall back on in our hour of need (and in turn are not people who can be fallen upon), what is our town? We need community. Our brains are wired to be with people, and no matter how much you may like being alone, you can't go on like that forever. Even monks in their monasteries have people around them. Our age is one of loneliness. Our community needs to step in and help!

I am only an eighth grader. Yet, there are my plans.