



# BUCKET FILL-OSOPHY 101™

Words of Wisdom to Keep Your Bucket Filled

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## Making a Difference

By Glenn Merillat, Newsletter Designer/Editor

This week we'd like to tell you a bucketfilling story about Ashlee Shields, who completed her student teaching at Lynnewood Elementary School in Haverton, Connecticut.

In the fall of 2012, Ashlee chose to do a voluntary community service project and "We are Bucket Fillers" was launched at Lynnewood. Her goal was to teach her students to be kind and caring. Her inspiration was — you guessed it — Carol McCloud's first book, *Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids*.

Ashlee covered it all: The fact that everyone has a bucket, how to use the bucket's lid, and how filling buckets is *always* better than dipping in them.

As she said in one interview, "Students are moved to treat each other with respect and kindness. By acting positively to peers, students experience a contagious effort to do nice things for others while increasing their own self-worth and confidence."

She's right. Like happy laughter, bucket filling is contagious and before long Ashlee had the support of Lynnewood's teachers, administrators, and school district.

The Bucket Fillers Team always recommends that teachers first read and then talk about the book with their students before introducing creative ideas to support bucket filling.

After reading the book, Kim Mullen, Ashlee's supervising first-grade teacher, offered Ashlee her support and together they delivered kits containing the book, a large bucket display, activity ideas, and additional resources.

They introduced a "classroom bucket" and, when students committed acts of kindness, their teachers dropped pom-poms or colorful styrofoam peanuts in the bucket to represent bucketfilling behaviors.

The children loved it.

Students helped classmates clean their desks of clutter, gave sincere compliments, and volunteered to be study buddies.

Another wonderful act of bucketfilling involved two girls who helped a classmate face her fear of heights and climb the playground jungle gym. Students also made sure that no one was left without a partner and were always included in a group.

Bucketfilling language is frequently used by both students and teachers.

Savannah, one of the first-grade students, has wholeheartedly embraced bucket filling. She's learned that, "You have to do kind things. You can help people when they're upset. When they're sad, you can make them happy. If someone asks you to do something, you can do it for them."

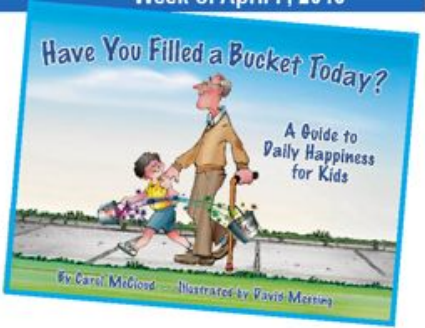
Savannah understands bucket filling and bucket dipping and can explain it like a seasoned bucket filler. The "biggest thing" she has learned? "You don't just have to do every act to get a reward. You can just do it out of the kindness of your heart."

Kim said in an interview, "This experience was a very positive influence on the classroom and school environment. I really have seen a difference. The children are more aware of their own, and other people's, feelings. It's refreshing to see that there can be so much love and care in a school."

Ashlee agrees, "After participating in this project, I feel I see the world through Bucket Filler eyes."



Two final notes: "We are Bucket Fillers" is now an ongoing program at Lynnewood Elementary and Ashlee was honored with the Student Educator Award 500 from West Chester University's Institute for Educational Excellence and Entrepreneurship.



## Bucket Chuckle

When I worked for an organization that delivered meals to the elderly, I would take along my four-year-old daughter.

She was always fascinated by the appliances of old age - canes, walkers, wheelchairs, etc. One day I saw her staring at a set of false teeth in a jar. She turned to me in amazement and said, "The tooth fairy is never gonna believe this."



Designed and edited by Glenn Merillat

## Congratulations, Robyn

Robyn Denke, of Storrs, CT, is our bucket filler of the week. You have a book coming your way. Every bucket filler is a winner. Encourage your friends to get their buckets filled by subscribing to our free e-newsletter at [www.bucketfillers101.com](http://www.bucketfillers101.com)

## Words of Wisdom

"Life is short, my young friend, so think what is good, speak what is kind, and never forget that life's real treasures are people, not things"— Steve Goodier, author and founder of *Life Support System*