

Global Day of Beauty

In 2021, three five-year-old girls in Mobile, Alabama changed the world. Best friends, they were also hospital patients with terminal diseases from toxic industrial waste in their mostly poor, blighted and ugly neighborhood. With less than a year to live, they sent a wish to the Grant-A-Wish Foundation: that for just one day, people would go out and do something to make the world beautiful and be happy.

The Grant-A-Wish Foundation exists to try to help terminally ill children realize dying wishes. When this wish came in, with the cutest video ever, shot on a cellphone, Eleanor, the staffer who received it broke out in tears. She literally bawled, and her co-workers had to comfort her. Then, they saw the video.

The girls each had on little princess dresses. Two had funny hairdos that looked like water features. One was bald as a result of medical treatments, but had a ribbon and bow around her head. They held hands, and were cuter than puppies, full of innocence, presence and joy. They clearly loved each other. Their eyes were disproportionately large and bright, but touched by pain. Thin as wires, they took turns, in the hospital room they shared.

“Hi, I’m Olivia,” began the smiling little African-American girl, the charismatic leader of the group.

“And I’m Esperanza,” continued the smiling little Mexican-American girl, a little reserved, but impish.

“And I’m Cassie,” continued the smiling, third little Caucasian-American girl, excited but shy.

“We’re best friends, but we’re dying,” said Olivia, matter-of-factly.

“Yeah, we got sick from some bad stuff coming out of the factory,” said Esperanza.

“Our parents are sad about it. But they were also sad before. I try to tell them it’s OK, but that makes them sad too,” said Cassie.

“They say people are greedy and mean, and it’s ugly to have to live the way we do,” said Olivia.

“Where we live, things are broken, and people are sad and don’t have enough money,” said Esperanza.

“It’s not safe outside, so we have to stay indoors, and it’s really hot in summer,” said Cassie.

“There’s pavement and broken glass and trash and stuff everywhere, and people are scared,” said Olivia.

“Yeah, people are scared of the government, and guns, and drugs, and police, and poisons, and bills,” said Esperanza.

“My grandma’s sick, too, but she still comes to see us,” said smiling Cassie. “She said she’d give anything if we could all just go outside one sunny day, each just do one thing to make the world more beautiful, and everything could just be beautiful for just one day, and we could all be happy.”

“Yeah,” said Olivia, “and the nurse said we each get to make a wish before we die. We talked about it, and we want to wish for the same thing, so it has more magic to come true.”

“Yeah, so, we wish, for just one day, people will go outside and do something to make things beautiful, and everybody can just be outside and be happy, and Cassie’s grandma can see that,” said Esperanza.

“Yeah, so that’s our wish. We wish people will go outside, and make things beautiful, just one time, and all be happy, and Grandma can see that,” said Cassie.

“That’s our wish,” said Olivia.

“Yeah, that’s our wish,” said Esperanza.

Then, they piled in together, hugging and laughing, but Olivia had to sit down, because she got tired.

After Eleanor showed the video in the office, everyone there was crying and hugging each other. They agreed they had to do something big about this wish. They didn’t know how, but no matter what, they were going to do all they could to grant this wish. Something powerful passed through them that day.

Years before, the Grant-a-Wish Foundation had an amazing experience, shared in the film [Batkid Begins](#). A boy had wished to be Batman for a day; that caught fire in the public imagination; and people came together to make that wish come true. Many thousands showed up, many in airplanes, as this small boy in a batman suit, with a man in a batman suit, enacted staged rescues on the streets of Santa Francesca. It blew up on social media. A Lamborgoni bat-car was donated. A real musical score was written for it. The mayor gave Batkid the key to the city, and U.S. President Ozama called to thank him for saving us.

The Grant-a-Wish Foundation team determinedly pinky swore to make something big happen for these little girls, and they did. They worked hard, on the phones, with press releases, writing all they knew. They set a date four months ahead for “Create Beauty and Be Happy Day,” posted the video online, and it went viral almost overnight. It spread around the world in a week or two, linked to by hundreds of millions of social media users. News stations ran the story on evening news shows. It was on the front pages of newspapers. There was just something about that story, about those little girls and their wish that triggered something deep in people’s hearts. It was profoundly moving and motivating.

Teachers and students talked about it in school classrooms. Children talked about it after school. Children talked about it with their parents. People talked about it around water coolers in workplaces. It was a topic over drinks in bars. Wives smacked into place husbands who didn’t take it seriously. Motions were made and passed on legislature and city council floors around the world.

Four months later, on 3/5, so we could remember that even three five-year-olds can make a difference, the girls and their families were picked up at 7am in beautiful horse-drawn carriages. They wore new clothes, hand made by local admirers, beautiful southern dresses and sunhats covered in fresh flowers. They rode slowly and wide-eyed past news crews and adoring crowds from the hospital to their “hood”, where their dilapidated homes had been quickly and beautifully remodeled and paid for by donors. Beautiful flowers and trees had been planted all over. Live bands played beautiful music in the streets. The children had a hard time eating well with their illnesses, but they and their families were treated to a beautiful picnic brunch by the river. They heard other children outdoors, laughing and playing. After brunch, they were fetched in limousines and driven to the airport, where they boarded Air Force 1 and were flown to Washington, DC.

On the way, the girls napped, but Cassie’s grandma watched coverage of the day from around the world. It is known for sure that at least 750 million people took that day off from work, all around the world, and it was absolutely phenomenal what people did.

A 26-year-old woman named Parvati in Bangalore, India developed a mobile application that made it easy for people to log their activities for the day, describe them, and tag the location using GPS. A major Silicon Valley company funded the project, promoted it big, and made sure it could handle scale. Over 900 million acts of beauty were logged before it was all over, on every continent, including Antarctica.

The girls and families rode to the U.S. Capital in a beautiful boat on the Potomac and princess carriages from the river. Every member of Congress, the Supreme Court and the President of the United States were on the Capital stairs, by 2 enormous, gorgeous tapestries with "Beauty" and "Happiness" on them. It's estimated that 3 million people traveled to Washington, DC that day, spread over the lawn and throughout the city, where cars weren't allowed to drive. A symphony orchestra played. The sun was shining. A beautiful sculpture was installed in the grass in front of the capital. Children played games. People ate picnics outdoors. Dancers performed. There was a music festival at the other end of the Capital Mall, and magnificent fireworks. Boats paraded light shows down the Potomac River at night.

In front of all, with the world's media watching and recording, leaders of several nations and the U.N. presented the girls and Cassie's grandma with bouquets of flowers, the girls with Congressional Medals of Honor, and, symbolically, the keys to the hearts of all the people in the world. At 6pm, they flew back to Mobile and spent the night in their new homes with their families, with nurses there. All were happy.

Something about those girls and their wish touched us deeply. Tears to fill seas fell that day. Never had any event been as covered as that event by global media. It was the front-page story on some 80% of newspapers around the world the next day. People were happy. We made extreme efforts. We came together to create beauty together. Art, sculpture, living things, events... Songs were written about it. Bands performed and lovers made love for it. It transcended money, race, gender, location, politics, age, beliefs, religions, everything. People's hearts opened, and we felt profound love and beauty.

Something important shifted permanently for many that day. The world changed, and three little girls and all the many people whose hearts they touched changed it. Those little girls got their wish, and millions of people made special efforts to grant it. Nobody saw it coming. It was absolutely stunning.

A year later, all 3 girls and Cassie's grandma were dead, the factory shut. 24-year-old Sanjay in Chennai developed *Discover Beauty*, a free game and app for finding beauty logged in Parvati's system. It lets us make treasure hunts in various ways out of finding beauty people have created, and it's very popular. We frequently make excursions to explore human created beauty using that tool, as school classes, families, individuals, lovers and as good friends. It's perpetually funded as a global non-profit.

Almost 40 years later, March 5th is the *Global Day of Beauty*. On that day, people around the world take off from work, go outside, create and appreciate beauty and just try to be happy. More than 1 trillion human acts of beauty have been registered, including beautiful trees, landscaping, plants and flowers, beautiful sculptures, buildings, murals, concerts, lighting, walking paths, fountains, and all manner of things, songs and events. Hundreds of thousands of organizations and communities have launched on that date. Hundreds of millions of people have been married on that day. There are statues of those three little girls on the U.S. Capital Mall and in capital cities in many countries around the world.