

2nd

MRS. TRENT: MORE THAN JUST A LUNCH LADY

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In Mrs. Taranko's 6th grade class, I sat there listening to CNN10 in my seat. Hearing about Covid-19 in China and people getting sick and dying, but not thinking anything about it. Then, one day, my mom told me that our school was shutting down because of Covid-19, and I didn't know what to think. One day, one more day left of normalcy, one more day left of socialization, one more day left of seeing my friends until this was over, and we didn't know when that was. I got to school, and everybody was talking about Covid--that was the only subject. Friends were hugging each other saying goodbye because nobody knew what was going to happen. Our teachers told us to stay safe, wash our hands, and stay at home. That's when I knew this was serious, but I had never been through anything like this before but there was somebody who opened my eyes even more. Her name was Mrs. Trent.

She was the Whitehall Middle School lunch lady in my 7th grade year. She wasn't my favorite at first, or anybody's favorite at first, because when we wanted to do something, she had to tell us no because of the Covid-19 rules. In our minds, she was the grumpy lunch lady who was mean, but she was actually just trying us keep us safe and healthy. So, many days of me thinking, Why couldn't she be nicer and just let us do the stuff that we wanted? My friends and I, one day, started playing tag, and we played for maybe one minute before Mrs. Trent shut us down. I was disappointed and angry, but I spent the rest of recess standing next to her, talking to her, and she told me that her parents had died from Covid. That hit me right in the heart. I told her I was sorry to hear that and, from that point on, I followed all the Covid rules because I can't even imagine how I would feel if one of my loved ones died from Covid-19.

January 27, 2021, I walked into Mr. Sheesly's class. He was my homeroom teacher and also my math teacher. He pulled out a piece of paper and told us it was from our principal, Mr. VanWieren. He opened it and started reading it to us. The note told us that Mrs. Trent had passed away from Covid-19. Mr. Sheesly was all teary eyed and on the verge of tears, and I was in pure shock. Why? Why did this have to happen? Just so you know, Mrs. Trent was already in the hospital at this time, and I thought everything was going to be alright, but I was completely wrong. Mr. Sheesly told us that we would be making cards for the Trent family. I started to walk up to get my piece of paper. When I looked over at my friend, Matthew Leatherman, I saw that he had his eyes closed and was just sitting there. Everybody was like, "What is he doing?" I said,

"I know what he's doing," and I walked back to my seat, sat down, and started praying.

I didn't start praying for her to come back to life or anything like that. I started praying for the Trent family, telling God to let them know that everything is going to be alright, and that she is in a better place now with no pain, no worry, and no suffering. Eternal happiness.

Mrs. Trent is the one who opened my eyes, the one who made me put my mask over my nose, the one who made me wash my hands and put on hand sanitizer, the one who made me stay six feet away from even my friends. Thank you, Mrs. Trent, thank you for being here, thank you for making me realize that there is more to life than just feeling sorry for myself. A small conversation can spark big understanding, compassion, and love. This is more than games, Mrs. Trent. I will never forget you.

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