

Midpoint Check-In: How to Brighten Peoples' Newsfeeds

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Hello again! As a reminder, I am working with HandsOn Network/Points of Light as a communications intern this summer. The past few months have flown by – I can't believe I only have 2 more weeks in DC. I've loved getting to spend time in our nation's capital working, exploring, and learning. Last week, I was asked to contribute to the Points of Light Blog and write about my interning experience so far. I would like to share what I wrote with all of you, my Newcomb Tulane Community:

Over the past few years, particularly the past few weeks, we have seen so many unfathomable acts of tragedy sweep the globe. Each time I go to open my CNN news

app I am forced to hold my breath, anxious about what devastating headline might paint the screen next. While I know people from other eras have faced similar uncertainty, heartbreak, and anger, it is easy to feel hopeless and isolated, especially in a time when the media so often focuses on sensationalizing negative news. This is not to say that this type of news is not important, valid, and worth our attention and concern –it certainly is; however, positive stories frequently get ignored or swept over quickly, leaving us dejected.

We are more inundated with news than ever before: we are surrounded by televisions in social spaces like restaurants and bars; we all carry portable devices like phones and laptops equipped to access news at the click of a button; and most of us subscribe to various forms of social media, in which the line between opinion and fact can easily get misconstrued. Like it or not, over half of social network site users (by the way, two-thirds of U.S. adults are on Facebook) [have used social media to share news stories, videos, or images](#). With so many people frantically sharing and accessing information via social media, it makes sense that we feel increasingly overwhelmed and pessimistic about the current state of our world.

While social media has given us the power to share countless articles of destruction and despair, it also has given us the potential to spread hope –points of light throughout the online community, if you will. As the Communications and Marketing Intern with HandsOn Network, I have had the opportunity to work on a variety of projects including analytic reports, writing, editing, graphic design, and much more, but unexpectedly, one of my favorite ongoing projects I have taken part in is curating HandsOn Network’s Facebook and Twitter pages.

Every Monday when I get into the office the first thing I do is scroll through a sea of news in search of uplifting stories of service, triumph, and positive change. I get to read about all of the life-changing work our Affiliates are doing in their communities, innovative start-ups designed to enhance peoples’ lives, and outstanding individuals who care about strangers. A favorite story that I came across was about [two young brothers who started their own charity to feed the homeless population of New Orleans](#). Another was about an artist who created a [massive mural that spans across fifty buildings](#) in honor of humanity and the human experience.

One of my favorite aspects of Points of Light and HandsOn Network is their everlasting belief that small actions by dedicated individuals, together, have the power to affect change and can positively transform communities. As a

communications intern this summer, I feel lucky to have the chance to share content that will brighten peoples' days and feel that in some small way I am making a difference by spreading information –information that has the power to heal, encourage, and inspire during a time in which we need it most.

If you're interested in checking out the HandsOn Network Facebook page, which I have been curating, [visit this site](#).