



Sometimes our World is Nearly Perfect

By Bill Gosse

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If we believe the nightly news, our world is in complete shambles.

I know what we see is true – I just can't believe our world is that bad.

I believe wonderful people are making a difference in our world, even in youth sports.

At a fundraising dinner for a special needs school, a father delivered a wonderful story about his son "Johnny" who attended this special school.

Johnny and his father walked past a park where some boys were playing baseball. Johnny knew the boys and wondered if he could play. The father figured the boys would reject having someone like Johnny on their team, but he knew how it would make his son feel.

The father approached the boys and asked if Johnny could play. One of the boys replied they were losing by six runs and the game was in the eighth inning, but Johnny could play on his team and they would try to let him bat in the ninth inning.

As Johnny broadly smiled, he labored to the bench and put on a team shirt.

During that inning, Johnny's team scored three runs, but still trailed.

For the top of the ninth inning, Johnny grabbed a glove and played right field. Nothing came his way, but he didn't care. His smile clearly indicated he was just happy to be playing.

In the bottom of the inning, Johnny's team scored again to draw within two.

With two outs and the bases loaded, Johnny was up next. The winning run was on base and the team had to decide if they were going to let the game slip away.

Surprisingly, Johnny was given a bat as he walked up to the plate. A hit seemed impossible because Johnny didn't even know how to hold the bat.

Seeing his opponents had put winning on hold, the pitcher moved in closer to lob the first pitch.

Johnny swung and missed badly. The pitcher moved in again and lobbed the next pitch. Johnny hit a slow grounder back to the pitcher.

The game would be over, but the pitcher fielded the grounder and purposely threw it way over the first baseman's head.

Everyone yelled for Johnny to run to first. Running was very difficult for Johnny, but he made it to first. Because the ball had been thrown so far, everyone yelled for him to run to second.

This continued as everyone wanted Johnny to make it home. Johnny awkwardly ran toward second, then third and finally home. He was giving everything he had, and now the boys from both teams and the spectators were screaming for Johnny to run.

Johnny stepped on home plate and was cheered as the hero who hit the winning grand slam.

Johnny didn't make it to another summer. He died that winter, but he never forgot being the hero for a day and making his father extremely happy.

I believe stories like this can happen with regularity, even without kids with disabilities.

Do you believe?