

## Teenagers: Angels in the Making

I believe that God sent angels to this world to guide us through our daily challenges. Most people think of angels as winged creatures with halos. I think of angels as family and friends who are always there for you. Sometimes, all you need is an angel.

Cliques have always been a problem for teenagers. Students in school are classified into different groups that deter them from interacting with each other depending on their reputation. Teens often stress over fitting in and being accepted that they lose sight of who they really are. They need a place in Hawaii where they can be themselves and be angels to each other.

The pressures to fit in sometimes lead to bad decisions. Someone may try so hard to be accepted that they are pressured into doing reckless things such as drugs, alcohol, and bullying. Being not able to fit in may lower someone's self-esteem so much that they figure that they have to harm themselves to make things stop. This has also led to cases of teen suicide.

I think setting up an after school teen program where everyone is accepted will help teenagers with differences interact and find a common problem that they can work on together. The students will have an opportunity to use their unique talents to help one another and the community.

This program can be set up in almost every neighborhood with the funding of the Clarence T. C. Ching Foundation to provide counselors to supervise the teens. This program could be a place for teenagers to get together and discuss their own perspectives on how they can help out Hawaii. This gives them a sense of importance and helps them feel like they have a place in the world and with others. It will be a place where teens will set aside stereotypes and labels to work together as equals. The students who participate in this program will get together to plan community service projects that will benefit Hawaii. This gives them a reason to work together and cooperate with each other. There will be time for homework and other activities. Those who exceed academically will have an opportunity to help those who are struggling with school understand the curriculum. The teens that are athletic will get a chance to help and encourage their non-athletic schoolmates join a team. The "popular teens" can help "nerds" with relationship problems. These teens can share things like studying tips, dance moves, basketball skills, or maybe even their language with each other. This way, teens that usually never talk to each other will start to get along.

Mr. Clarence Ching, Hawaii's angel, devoted his whole life to helping others. Even though he was born into a poor, immigrant family, he still persevered to have a better future. He was once a teenager with difficulties too, but that didn't stop him. Every teenager deserves to not worry about fitting in and to focus more on gaining a better future.