

South Carolina teen raises \$70,000 for community by organizing basketball games

By Washington Post, adapted by Newsela staff on 12.16.19

Word Count **584**

Level **600L**



Adom Appiah of South Carolina in 2018. Photo courtesy of Marjorie Appiah

Adom Appiah is just 15 years old. Yet, he is already making a big difference in his community.

Adom learned about volunteering from his parents. When he was young, they organized book drives for kids and served food to the hungry. They also delivered Christmas presents to children with parents in jail. Adom would join his parents while they volunteered.

Adom lives in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Now, Adom chooses how to spend his time. He still continues to volunteer.

Raising Money Through Basketball Games

Over the past three years, he has raised over \$70,000 for charity. Charity is freely giving time or money to help those in need. Adom raises money through basketball games.

"It's always been instilled in me to volunteer," Adom said. He named his charity project Ball4Good. He donates the money he raises to various causes, including autism, the homeless and

abused children.

Adom was awarded a 2019 Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes. He received \$10,000. He is giving half of the money to his charity. The other half will help pay for his college.

Every year, the Ball4Good games sell out of tickets. This year, the men's and women's Ball4Good games raised more than \$30,000. The money will go to community groups that help students and others.

The first Ball4Good game in 2017 went really well. It led to the start of Adom's nonprofit.

"He represents hope for the future," Mary Thomas said. She advises Adom.

Adom uses his connections to get people to play in his games. He also calls people and uses social media. He used Twitter to connect with one Ball4Good player. His name is Anthony Ianni. Adom admired Ianni. Ianni has autism. He is the first player known to have autism and play college basketball. Adom admired Ianni for how Ianni speaks out about his autism.

"I tweeted him and somehow he responded," Adom said.

Hands-On Way Of Helping

Ianni said he liked Adom's hands-on way of helping others. He wanted to be a part of it. It was a great chance for Ianni to spread his message of hope.

"I couldn't say no," Ianni said. "I wanted to help be a part of his mission."

Ianni was honored to speak at Ball4Good's event.

Ball4Good started as Adom's community service project in seventh grade.

Ball4Good connects two things Adom is passionate about: Sports and community.

"He found that sweet spot that drove him to work so hard at it," Kelsea Turner said. She was Adom's seventh-grade history teacher. "He's a deeply purposeful guy."

Adom is involved in many activities. He is also in student government, band and a video game club. He participated in the nationwide spelling bee twice. He speaks at schools and events to encourage people to volunteer. He has even written a children's book.

Supported 18 Charity Groups

Since 2017, Adom and Ball4Good have given money to 18 charity groups. They range from helping the homeless to supporting families of young people fighting cancer.

Adom does more than just deliver the money to these groups. He still volunteers.

"Adom is a doer," Greg Tolbert said. Tolbert works with Adom at the Boys & Girls Club.

Adom says he wants Ball4Good to go beyond his community. By getting others to join, his work can reach more people.

"Adom sets out to make a difference in the world and help kids who are not as fortunate as he is," Adom's 16-year-old friend, Maxwell Booker said. "He aims high and dreams big."