

Man sets up toilet paper giveaway on street corner

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An unlikely hero: Surfer sets up toilet paper exchange on street corner

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ENCINITAS, Calif. — Jonny Blue, a 33-year-old physical therapist and avid surfer from Encinitas, was seriously bummed Friday night.

He saw reports across the country of people hoarding toilet paper in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, and one of his good friends had a difficult time finding diapers and essential supplies for his kids at a nearby store.

So on Saturday morning Blue took a cardboard sign bearing the simple request — “Share your toilet paper” — and camped out on the corner of El Camino Real and Encinitas Boulevard.

“It just inspired me to remind people, listen, if you have a lot of something that probably means there are people who probably don’t have very much of it, because you took it all,” Blue said. “So sharing it is probably a good thing to keep in mind.”

The response was immediate and positive, with motorists honking horns in support. Drivers stopped to drop off rolls of toilet paper and, just as quickly, Blue would hand them off in an impromptu TP stock exchange.

“This guy came here and said he just ran out and was going to a bunch of stores and couldn’t find any,” Blue said as cars whizzed by. “Somebody had given me some so I gave it to him. He was stoked.”

“He was like, ‘Do you want me to pay you?’ I said, ‘No, man. Somebody gave it to me. Take it.’”

A moment later, a driver in a white pickup truck slowed down just enough to toss out a roll to Blue’s burgeoning bundle.

“People are loving it,” Blue said. “People are honking, smiling, laughing. It’s actually been good because it’s actually been kind of a rough time right now.”

The run on toilet paper and other items such as hand sanitizers and disinfecting wipes has led local grocery stores and national chains such as Target and Walmart to limit the amounts shoppers can purchase at one time. Last week, three women in a supermarket in Australia got into a hair-pulling brawl over toilet paper.

Blue launched his fledgling Robin Hood enterprise at 9 a.m. and, said during a break at 2 p.m. that he would resume for a couple more hours later in the afternoon.

“I think people want a sense of community,” Blue said. “When things are really challenging, people are looking to band together and be unified. It feels like I kind of struck on a common theme where people were thinking, ‘Why are people hoarding toilet paper?’

“It’s a simple thing, but it’s something that’s really tangible and really affects people’s lives, and when people saw my sign it really resonated with them.”

Blue said he planned to return to his post Sunday.

“I just want to encourage everyone to be better,” he said. “Difficult times can reveal us to ourselves and help us see ourselves more clearly.”



Article Source

Discussion Questions

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1. Define burgeoning, fledgling, impromptu, resonate, tangible
2. What led this young man to do what he did?
3. The writers called this a “Robin Hood enterprise.” What do you think they meant by that?
4. Do you think that’s a good description? Why or why not?
5. Mr. Blue said “I think people want a sense of community.” Have you seen that during this challenging time? If so, what have you seen?
6. Mr. Blue said that people laughed as they passed by. Do you think he did more good in actually distributing scarce supplies, or in helping people find something funny in a stressful time?
7. Do you think this is a good use of his time? Why or why not?
8. How have you been using any extra time you may have as a result of the various cancellations and requests for people to stay home? What could you be doing to make good use of the time?