



**FREE
LAUNDRY**

NEW DAY
CHURCH
FOR EVERYONE

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Dominic Osceola, left, and Nigel Osceola hold up a sign advertising the free laundry provided by New Day Church. (Courtesy photo)

When Connie Osceola learned of the devastation Hurricane Irma caused in September, she used it as an opportunity to teach her grandsons Nigel Osceola, 12, and Dominic Osceola, 11, about giving back to the community.

The two brothers, who live in Tampa, went with members of New Day Church in September to provide free laundry services to hurricane victims. The boys spent hours helping advertise the service and carry bags of clothes.

"I wanted to help the people who had no electricity and couldn't wash their clothes," Dominic said, saying that seeing the devastating impacts of the hurricane opened his eyes. "It made me want to help them so much."

Nancy Hailey, who helped bring Nigel and Dominic to the service, explained that the Brandon-based church hosts the free laundry program as a quarterly initiative. Throughout the year, church members collect quarters so that they can provide about \$500 of free laundry to the communities they visit.

"The boys volunteered to come and help and were very excited to be doing it," she said. "They smiled and greeted everyone that came in."

Nigel said volunteering with the church was a good experience.

"I just thought it would be nice to help them," he said. "It was fun."

While the boys completed the service opportunity to help the community, Connie added that it serves as a testament to the boys' perseverance.

She explained the brothers come from a broken home and she has raised them on and off the past 12 years. The brothers excel academically and have remained on honor roll. They are even on track to partake in Brandon Academy's International Baccalaureate (IB) Program, a rigorous international initiative aimed at holistically preparing students for higher education. The service hours the boys accrue also help qualify them for the National Junior Honor Society and National Honor Society.

"Against all odds, they've exceeded my expectations," Connie said. "They've surprised me that they can still continue on and learn."

Accruing service hours will also help ensure the boys prepare for college, Connie explained. She said that if they continue with community service, it will help them qualify for Florida's Bright Futures Scholarship. Regardless of the academic opportunities, Nigel and Dominic just want people to know community service is a good experience. They plan on going to another community service event with New Day around Christmas.

At the end of it all, Dominic's only wish is to spread positivity. His message for those still recovering from Hurricane Irma is: "Keep your hopes up, anything can be accomplished."

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