

# From Quora: Posted by Aisha Nakamura

At the end of sixth grade, a twelve-year-old boy did the same thing every kid does on the last day of school. He carried his brand-new yearbook around the classroom and asked his classmates to sign it.

One by one, they told him no.

And what that heartbroken little boy wrote in his own yearbook that day would go on to move an entire community — and, before it was over, one very famous movie star. His name is Brody Ridder. And in May of 2022, he was finishing sixth grade at the Academy of Charter Schools in Westminster, Colorado.

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Brody had transferred to the school back in fifth grade, and the truth was, the last couple of years had been hard. He'd struggled to fit in. He'd been bullied — pushed, called names — and though it had eased a little after his mom raised it with the school, the sting of being the odd one out never quite went away. Brody, a sweet kid who loves chess and fencing and dinosaurs, tended to sit by himself at lunch and play alone at recess.

So when the yearbooks were handed out on the last day, Brody went around the room, hopeful, and asked his classmates to sign his.

Most of them refused. Some flat-out said no. A couple did scribble their names — but that was all: no messages, nothing about how funny or smart or kind he was. Just two bare signatures and two notes from his teachers. Page after page after page, his yearbook was blank.

And then Brody did something that would break the heart of everyone who heard about it.

He sat down, opened his own yearbook, and — because no one else had — he wrote a message to himself. In his own small handwriting, he wrote:

"Hope you make some more friends. — Brody Ridder."

He signed his own yearbook. And then he wished himself better luck.

When he handed the book to his mother, Cassandra, and she turned to that page and read the note her little boy had written to himself, she said her heart just shattered.

That night, wanting other parents to talk to their kids about kindness, Cassandra posted a photo of Brody's lonely, self-signed page in the private Facebook group for the school's families. She wasn't expecting much. She just needed people to see it.

But people saw it. And then something began to happen.

One of the parents showed the post to her seventeen-year-old daughter, an eleventh-grader named Joanna Cooper. Joanna took one look at that photo — at the little boy who'd had to sign his own yearbook — and made up her mind on the spot. "We're going to sign his yearbook," she said, "because no kid deserves to feel like that."

She started texting her friends. And she wasn't the only one — another eleventh-grader, Simone Lightfoot, who had been bullied herself when she was younger, was doing the very same thing. Overnight, the word spread through the older grades.

The next morning, the door to Brody's sixth-grade classroom opened. And in walked the big kids.

One after another, the older students — eighth-graders, eleventh-graders, teenagers Brody had never even met — came into the room, formed a line, and asked for his yearbook. And one by one, they signed it. Not

only their names, either. They filled his pages with real messages — that he was awesome, that he mattered, that things would get better, that he had people in his corner. Some even wrote down their phone numbers so he could reach out.

And here is the part that may be the sweetest of all. As those big kids poured into the room to show Brody he was loved, several of his own classmates — the very kids who hadn't signed the day before — got up out of their seats, walked over, and signed it too.

By the time it was finished, Brody's once-empty yearbook was so completely full that there was no blank space left anywhere in it.

He went home that day a changed boy. His exact words to his mom were four little words she'll never forget: "This is the best day ever."

But the story wasn't quite done. Because when it spread beyond the school and went out into the wider world, it caught the attention of someone rather famous — the actor Paul Rudd. Yes, Ant-Man himself.

Paul Rudd reached out to Brody personally. He called him up, and the two of them talked about all the things they had in common — chess, and fencing, and dinosaurs. Then Rudd sent him a care package, including a signed Ant-Man helmet and a handwritten note. Things get better, the note promised him. And, Rudd added, he was quite sure that Brody was, in his words, "the coolest kid there is."

It's hard to imagine a better ending. A lonely little boy who had to sign his own yearbook — and, within days, an entire school of older kids and one Marvel superhero had lined up to tell him the truth: that he was smart, and funny, and awesome, and worth showing up for all along.

Sometimes the whole world just needs one person to say, "no kid deserves to feel like that" — and then to do something about it.

