THE KINDNESS OF STRANGERS

In the summer of 2014, Joe Robinson found something unexpected in a pot he was selling at an arts festival. It was a $100 bill with the name "Benny" written on it.

Joe was at a loss for words on how the money ended up in one of his handmade pots. It was no accident. A mysterious philanthropist named Benny had put it there.

Benny is a household name in Salem, Oregon. His identity is secret, but everyone has heard of him. For years he has been randomly hiding $100 bills all over Salem. The brand new $100 bills are all signed "Benny."

The man with the big pockets and an even bigger heart has given away an estimated $50,000.

Benny's bills have been found in sleeping bags, baby carriages, boxes of candy, and packs of diapers. One lady who was down on her luck found one in a box of cereal. She wept tears of joy.

The random act of kindness helped her when her family was suffering from health problems.

On another occasion, an eight-year-old and his friend found one in a store's toy bin. They used the money to buy toys.

They then donated the toys to a children's group.

Over 50 percent of people who find the bills use them to fund a charity close to their heart, or help a stranger in need. Benny's generosity is contagious and has a domino effect.

It's common knowledge that there are psychological and emotional benefits to helping others.

Doing good feels good. But research into altruism has revealed that acts of kindness are also good for our health.

Helping others lowers our blood pressure, reduces social anxiety, and boosts our mood. By lending a helping hand, we are also helping ourselves.

تیــلماج

Like Benny, Dina Salivan has also spread kindness in her town. In 2012, the 52-year-old received a terminal cancer diagnosis. It was devastating news. She became determined to do something worthwhile with her remaining few years.

She gave $80,000 to family and friends and asked them to spend the money on charity or random acts of kindness.

Dina's friends didn't let her down. They used her money to help refugees, and to fund children's charities and other worthwhile causes.

Dina's gesture had a snowball effect. Her example influenced hundreds of people beyond her immediate circle.

According to Dina, she also benefited. She says, "The beauty and kindness of people have always been there. If I hadn't gotten sick, I wouldn't have seen it. It's brought me joy, at a time when I need it most."