

Where Did the Money Go?

A Path to Unity children's story





It was a hot Saturday at Unity Park. Children ran across the playground, families walked the paths, and a line had formed at the only working drinking fountain.



Beside it, the second fountain had a familiar sign: OUT OF ORDER — AGAIN.
Maya stopped. “Still broken?” Jordan asked. Maya nodded.



A few days later, Maya and Jordan attended a community meeting with their families. Mr. Bell, chairman of the Unity Park Committee, stood at the front of the room.



"Last year, our community raised money to improve Unity Park," Mr. Bell announced. People applauded. Maya raised her hand. "Mr. Bell... what did the money improve?" The applause stopped.



Mr. Bell pulled out a thick folder filled with receipts, bills, notes, and papers. "It's all in here somewhere." Jordan leaned toward Maya. "That's a lot of somewhere."



Maya simply wanted to understand. “What was the money supposed to pay for? How much was raised, and what was it spent on? And why is the fountain still broken?”



Mr. Bell admitted there wasn't one simple place where the answers could be found. So instead of arguing, the group started sorting receipts, matching expenses, and comparing notes with the original plans.



Slowly, the papers told a story. Some money had paid for new banners, extra lights, and a storage cabinet. They were useful things—but they were not the improvements people expected.



The priorities had changed without anyone clearly explaining why. Jordan studied the receipts. “So nobody stole the money. We just stopped knowing where it was going.”



As voices rose, Maya stood beside the receipts. "We know what happened now. We can fix it." Mr. Bell nodded. "We should have explained the changes. I should have explained them."



Knowing what went wrong was only the beginning. The community discussed three needs: repair the fountain, add shade over the playground, or begin saving for an accessible swing. Each choice included a clear price.



The families voted to repair the fountain first and begin saving for the accessible swing. The cost was written down, the person responsible was named, and everyone knew when to expect an update.



As the repair moved forward, everyone could follow the money. The estimated cost was posted, each receipt was added, and every change was explained. There was no thick folder to search through.



Two weeks later, Maya and Jordan returned to Unity Park. The OUT OF ORDER sign was gone. Maya pressed the silver button, and cold water splashed into the basin. Jordan grinned. "Much better."



The community had learned something bigger. From then on, every project would clearly show four things: what was promised, what it would cost, what progress had been made, and what was completed.



The mistake had not destroyed the community's trust. Correcting it openly helped rebuild it. Because trust doesn't come from saying everything is fine. Trust grows when people can see the truth for themselves.

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