

# Three Brothers and a Piano

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At birth I entered into a life of obligation and responsibility. For twenty five years my dad valiantly served in the United States Army and for those twenty five years my family went wherever we were told to go. It was our duty. Whenever we arrived to a new home there was an understanding that we would be leaving in two years. We learned not to get too attached; the less attached we became, the easier it was to say good-bye. Within the first fourteen years of my life, I had lived in seven places, gone to four elementary schools, driven from the west coast to the east coast, and flown across the both the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans. Although these experiences were unique and extraordinary, they came at a sacrifice: For fourteen years, I never had true friends--only my family.

After twenty-five years, my parents were tired of being told where to go and when to move. Now, it was their choice and they wanted to retire somewhere small, somewhere quiet--a reprieve that came in the form of Carlisle, Kentucky. This move, however, would be unlike any other. Who knew how long we would be living in this new home? This time, the friends we made would be friends to keep.

We arrived on a hot August Thursday four days before my first day of high school. I didn't know anyone and I definitely didn't know what to expect, but on the Sunday before that imminent day we attended church. There I met three brothers- my first friends. They were all members of the Nicholas County High School marching band- the school I would be attending- and they were eager to know if I played any instruments. I told them that I had been playing piano for four years and, upon hearing this, they invited me to join the marching band. I was told that a keyboard had just been donated to them a couple of years ago from the Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation. I was skeptical at first because I never thought of a keyboard as being in marching band. However, they corrected me saying that, in fact, most schools use synthesizers as a pit instrument. I still had some doubt, but I decided they would have more expertise as far as marching band goes. School hadn't even started and I already made friends and I had somewhere to belong.

Ms. Hale, the Nicholas County band director, was also glad to have me. It was a small band, only 25 students, so one individual can make all the difference. For me, however, it was those 25 kids that made all the difference. Thanks to the keyboard that was donated to us, I had a place to belong. A simple act of charity had made all the difference. My fears were put aside. Those 25 other students became like brothers and sisters. Most importantly, for it will stay with me for the rest of my life, a love was kindled inside me- a passion for music.

For three years now I have been a proud member of the Nicholas County High School marching band. That first year, not only did I play the keyboard but also a large variety of other pit instruments. In these few but spectacular years, I even learned to play mellophone as well as the French horn. Thanks to my band family and the Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation, I didn't only learn how to play instruments, I realized my potential and I became a better student, leader, teammate, and - most importantly - a better person. Music entered my life and it would never leave- and it all started with three brothers and a piano.