

Pennysave Turns Millionaire

2nd Place, Category II, Grades 4-6

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Ever since I can remember, I looked forward to my favourite Uncle's visits, which he did every year even though it, was just for five days.

Uncle John, as he was called by my family, always bought gifts for my parents, my sister, my two brothers and I. Our family was poor so everyone was always happy to receive these gifts. For me, it was more than the gifts, it was the stories he always found time to tell me.

Uncle John's stories were always funny and would leave me with tears streaming down my cheeks, but tonight, something told me that this story would be different. I listened attentively as Uncle John began.

A long, long time ago, a poor boy lived in a small village. He dreamt about being rich every night, so he decided that he would work very hard to make his dreams come true. He realised that one could not become rich by doing nothing.

The boy started doing errands before and after school and also on weekends for the villagers. He even washed and sold empty rum bottles to those who sold items like essence and seasonings, sweeping the yard and emptying the garbage for Mrs Henry was no problem because the money was sure.

He made sure though, that he never missed school and studied hard under candle light as his parents told him how important having a good education was.

Even during school holidays he did odd jobs here and there and saved his money. Every penny someone left by the roadside became his, which he would put in his secret hiding place. He called his hiding place "The Pennysave Bank" by which he was nicknamed, "Pennysave". He wanted his pennies to turn to dollars so he asked his mother for advice. They decided that if he could get coconuts and buy some sugar, she would make some sugar cakes to sell. The first sale of sugar cakes was good and he felt like half a millionaire already. He gave his mother one third of the money from the sale and took the rest for himself.

From advice given by his father he started a bank account. The sugar cakes were so tasty that people demanded more and more. From these sales the bank account grew bigger.

By the time he was fifteen he had a sound education and was very good in Mathematics, He was buying and selling anything people needed. This boy became a man who never lost his focus or buried his dream to become rich.

He left his homeland at an early age to a neighbouring island and started trading. Today "Pennysave" still sells to people the things they need. He now owns a chain of supermarkets and restaurants in two Caribbean countries and is planning to build some more right here.

I wanted to know why "Pennysave" did not spend his money, as a boy, to buy nice things and have a nice time. Uncle John then taught me the greatest lesson I will ever learn.

"Spending foolishly never makes you rich. Remaining focused, turning over your money and saying it wisely makes you rich. I know son, because I was that boy, he ended, with a big smile and gave me a huge hug.

I could not believe my ears, Uncle John was that boy, now a millionaire! He was once saying pennies from selling little things! He, Uncle John was even called "Pennysave"!

As I hugged him I too smiled with this man. "One day, I will be just like you, Uncle Pennysave," I whispered softly.