

out & about

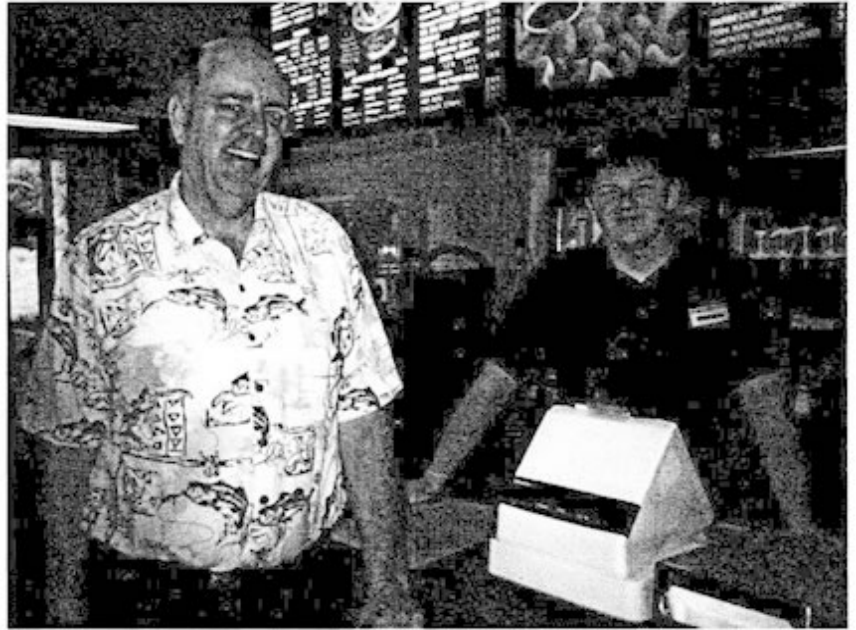
hero

A Hero to Many

Editor's Note: The following article was written by Brandon Schutz, age 17, about his father, Michael Schutz, who operates the *DQ*® restaurant in Apopka, Fla. Brandon is also an employee at the Apopka restaurant.

Heroes come in all shapes and sizes; some are black, and some are white, some short, and some tall. My hero though is an average person who really made a difference during the 2004 hurricane season here in Central Florida. His contribution wasn't very big, but in his own way he helped many people through a troubling time.

My hero is my dad, Michael Schutz. During the 2004 hurricane season, we got hit pretty hard. People were without power, streets were flooded, and some people were hard pressed for things to eat. My dad is the owner of a *Dairy Queen* restaurant off Highway 436 in Apopka, and, while my family and I were without power at our own house, he went into town and opened the *Dairy Queen* restaurant as soon as he was able to. He cleared the drive-thru area of fallen debris along with the parking lot so that people could have somewhere to come and get something to eat. Since the *Dairy Queen* restaurant had not lost power, he allowed people to charge cell phones while they ate. He allowed people to use the phone to try and contact loved ones. When all was



Brandon Schutz (right), whose father Mike (left) owns the Apopka, Fla., DQ restaurant, is proud that his father helps the community.

said and done, he had provided a tiny little haven in the chaotic world that was left in the wake of the hurricanes.

His service to the general public was not an easy feat to come by though. Even though the *Dairy Queen* restaurant had power, it had no food items because it had not received a delivery in a few days. Not to be deterred from opening the restaurant, my dad started making calls all over Central Florida. In his calls, he asked for anything that others could spare as well as checking any and all local grocery stores for bread to help make his sandwiches. It was a very tedious affair that he endured, but he persisted in his search for food items and was successful.

With his supplies in hand and the help of my family, he opened the *Dairy Queen* restaurant for business. Not only did he offer food and drink for customers, but he also offered what was at the time a very precious commodity—bagged ice. Alongside this frozen gold, he offered a secondary if not a more desired one to people without power—an air conditioner.

When word spread that the *Dairy Queen* restaurant was open for business and had ice, food and drink, people came from all over to get some fresh food, ice, a chance to call loved ones, a blast of the AC and a change in scenery from the backs of plywood boards that they had been staring at for the past few days.

Some heroes perform great deeds like rescuing people from a fire, or dragging them out of an overturned car. But my dad, in his own unique way, was just as heroic, and that is why my dad, Michael Schutz, is my hero that greatly influenced my life during the strenuous 2004 hurricane season.
