

## Nubs

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By Eliza Jordan

I shook his hand and looked into his eyes. Deep, cloudy colors stared back at me. He smiled a simple smile and showed me how many teeth he had left. None were in the middle of his mouth. I stepped back to get a better look at the man that I had just extended my hand to. He stood there in wonderment looking at me; I was a stranger who was interested in who he was, what he was doing

there and why he had only four teeth and six fingers.

“My name’s Nubs,” he said to me, starting and stopping before the beginning of each word. He hesitantly looked at himself and then looked back at me.

“A nickname?” I said to him, pointing to his left hand which consisted only of a strong thumb. The name “Nubs” sounded appropriate after I got a closer look at him. He was not well-spoken, but he was happy. He was dirty, attentive and never shifted his weight from one torn up shoe to the other. He stood firm, dressed in a World Golf Village polo shirt and a green backwards hat. All of his clothing looked to be handed down from a shelter or a previous job.

But Nubs’ regular “jobs” were never regular — they were grueling days of long, hard labor-based work. He described being a Marine during the Vietnam War, how it led him back to Hastings, and thereafter, to work on the farms.

Hastings is a tiny town just north of St. Augustine that is home to many migrant farm workers. Many of these hard workers have either experienced tragic life situations or have lived in Hastings their entire life. Some live on a “camp,” where they may live with three other men in a concrete hotel-styled “apartment,” while others consider their home to be wherever they sleep that night.

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<http://gargoyle.flagler.edu/2012/11/nubs/>

The food bank held in the W.E Harris Community Center is not only a powerhouse for the hungry, but is also a life-saving set-up for hundreds of families who may not be able to eat otherwise.

Nubs was just one of many people at the Hastings food bank that I was assigned to film for class. He helped carry food in, set up, sweep, break down the food's cardboard boxes and leant his hand(s) to just about any effort he could. He smiled nervously at pretty faces, he waved to strangers and he was there and gone before you ever even had the chance to get his name.

Willing to help and happy to do so, Nubs made me think quickly and plainly of what was really important in this maze we call life. Love. Trust. Happiness. Peace. It sounds ridiculously cliché, but it's not every day that you meet someone whose extra cash is probably less than the cost of your socks. He barely had anything. The dirt on his fingertips could have left thick fingerprints. The hat on his head may have belonged to a 12-year-old boy who got sick of his Christmas gift after a measly six months. He didn't have a wallet. He had no valuables. He was materialistically poor, but he was emotionally rich. I suddenly looked up to him.

Nubs was a simple man who wanted nothing more than to wake up in the morning. After fighting, moving and working, having a family and leaving all of it to memory, he seemed to be one of the most grateful and appreciative people I've yet to come across. I didn't think that a man with such few teeth and fingers could touch my heart so deeply, but that was my poor judgement and now that's all long gone.