



# FLASHES OF INSPIRATION

Volume 11 Issue 2 A Newsletter for Inspiration Hospice Volunteers

February 2015

## Did You Really Do Everything Kind?

By Jane Wilcox

DYRDEK! No, this is not a greeting from an outer space visitor! A few weeks ago while visiting with a friend, she mentioned a story of the famous skateboarder named Rob Dyrdek. I have heard of this man in passing, but because I was ten the last time I attempted rolling down a hill on an 2 x 4 piece of wood with rickety roller skate wheels, I have not given this form of entertainment and the participants too much thought. (It really was a 2x4 with wheels! It was a dare....)



Mr. Dyrdek was being honored by the city of Los Angeles for building several skate parks for young and old to practice the art of skateboarding. He felt that the streets were not a safe place to hone their skills. Because of this kind gift and other contributions shared, the city wanted to honor him with a special day on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Dyrdek was flattered, but he replaced this accolade with a request of his own. He created an acronym with the letters of his name and presented it to the masses to help us all remember others.

**D.Y.R.D.E.K.**

**Did**

**You**

**Really**

**DO**

**Everything**

**Kind**

I have never had the tenacity to make or keep New Year Resolutions and since the month of January is closing out might I suggest we move on and celebrate February 1<sup>st</sup> with a:

### **“DID YOU REALLY DO EVERYTHING KIND” Day!**

Then wouldn't it be wonderful if we continued this exercise from here on out? What a wonderful world this would be (to paraphrase from a well-known song by James Taylor).

I think it would be glorious if every night, before exhaustion overtakes, we counted our blessings of kindness given to us and then counted the kind acts we remembered to do. I am pretty confident I would fall asleep counting what was given to me that day vs what I gave. But hey, I am willing to work on that lopsided tally.



Inspiration Hospice

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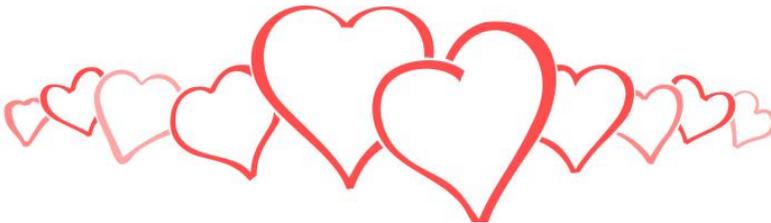
Who is willing to accept the challenge? Get your giving hearts started! Let me know what you noticed being done for you and then let me know how you brought joy to another. It is not bragging, it is called sharing and we were all taught to do that in Kindergarten. I would love to disclose some of these gestures to our many readers. And I know there are many readers!

(I really do understand that kindnesses should be done under a cloud of anonymity so I will not record your name, but your kind activities might just motivate another.)

Thank you for being so kind to me as we make many transitions at Inspiration - we are ALWAYS seeking volunteers; as one of our new nurses stated "All with wings are welcome."

Have a Heartfelt February - DYRDEK!

~ Jane



## Dedicated Hearts

Dedicated hearts like yours  
Are not so easy to find.  
It takes a special person to be  
So generous and kind.

To care so much for your fellow man  
Is a quality all too rare.  
Yet you give of your time and talents,  
For all in need to share.

So thank you for being a volunteer,  
We're privileged to work with you.  
We want you to know how appreciated you are,  
Not just today, but the whole year through.

## Volunteer Corner



We will be having our next **volunteer training** on February 2nd, 3rd, 9th, & 10th.

If you know anyone that might be interested, please have them call me at: (801) 450-4816 or email me at [jwilcox@inspirationhospice.com](mailto:jwilcox@inspirationhospice.com) Then we can get them quickly signed up and confirmed for this session!

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February is **American Heart Month!** Strive to stay "heart healthy" for yourself and your loved ones. Try to implement these practices for better heart health:

- Monitor your blood pressure and cholesterol
- Don't smoke
- Exercise regularly
- Eat a healthy diet
- Limit your sodium intake

### Did You Know?

Dark chocolate is rich in antioxidants that are beneficial to the cells of our hearts and blood vessels. Medical studies have shown that people who eat dark chocolate have healthier cardiovascular systems, with better blood circulation and lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels. So treat yourself!



## And We Thought We Knew by Lorelee Kurzius

**There is a song that goes** "...and he thought he knew what love was". It's been rolling around in my head for a couple of months now. The trouble is, my brain has changed the lyrics to "and I thought I knew what sTrEsS was".

**My very first article**, nearly six years ago was about the stress caregivers are under and how we can help. I had been watching and taking notes of caregivers in various situations and I thought I knew what stress was.

**Later, after bringing** my mom here to Utah to live with us and going through her many health travails including brain tumors, surgeries, chemo and radiation, I thought I knew what stress was.

**Nearly four years** before I became a caregiver myself, I had written in another article:

"...one is thrust, often quite suddenly, onto this journey that they are totally unprepared for. For example, there is much research to be done when you are still young and caring for an elderly parent. After all, what do you know of Medicare part D, incontinence, social security, osteoporosis and such? Or what does the healthy person know of catheters, bed sores and long term care insurance?"

**Whoa!** It's like I predicted my own future! (Perhaps next month I should write about inheriting a windfall.)

**I also wrote** these words:

"If one has dependent children in the home, things are even more stressful as there simply isn't time for one person to meet everyone else's needs. The caregiver finds him or herself on a path that branches off in several directions, each needing to be traveled *now*. The guilt

will eat at them as they must choose just one, leaving the others for another day. Even spouses and grown children can feel neglected in this situation, and often, of necessity, they are!"

**Again, those words** came to be my reality. When juggling my kids, grandkids, marriage, home, gardens and other responsibilities with caregiving, I thought I knew what stress was.

**As my Mom** got so that she couldn't even microwave lunch without starting a fire, I thought I knew what stress was.

**As she grew weaker**, needed help with toileting and calling the paramedics to help get her off the floor became commonplace, I really thought I knew what stress was.

**And then Dad**, who lives out of state, started to simultaneously decline! He was verbally abusive and non-cooperative with health care professionals as well as us. At this point, four of us sisters had to start working together and communicating closely as one lived in Idaho, one in Nevada and two in Utah and we thought we knew what stress was.

**I had to completely** take over Mom's very meager finances while my sister had to take over Dad's very messy finances, making really big decisions for them and we thought we knew what stress was.

**I, who had hoped** Mom could live out her final days in our home, found that after three years, extremely tough decisions had to be made. So we found ourselves arranging to get mom out of a nursing home and into assisted living. In the midst of this, Dad's VA funding fell through and we had to get him out of the Assisted Living we had *just* settled him into. We had to find him a senior



apartment and arrange home care and other services to make it manageable for him. Of course he turned all help away at the door and we thought we knew what stress was.

**At one point**, miscommunication turned into offended feelings and our sisters network broke down, leaving all stranded with their piece of the responsibility, unable to move forward and we thought we knew what stress was.

**Then a niece**, dependent upon Grandpa's handouts, started to interfere. Not only did she stir the pot, attempting to keep the sisters from working together, but under the guise of helping, she drained his bank account. She tricked him into signing a power of attorney and then asserted her authority so that the housing managers we were trying to deal with would refuse to speak to us. Of course she wanted none of the responsibility, just the money and power and THEN- **then we knew that we knew what stress was!**

**I won't deny** that dealing with this all brought us four sisters closer together over those stress-filled months, but there is such a thing as too close!

**As we tied up** all the loose ends and both parent's situations settled down some, we breathed a collective sigh of relief followed by a collective gasp of pain. Just as our folks simultaneously declined, so did we. The stress was winding down, but the effects of the stress wasn't done with us yet.

**I found that** a shoulder/arm that had been bugging me for months had, after all that lifting of Mom, suddenly become immobile and excruciating. I had to pack her out of this house and into her new place with one arm in a sling. I still can't push mom's wheelchair to take her to her doctor appointments.

**My local sister** was incapacitated with abscessed teeth that needed emergency root canals.

**My Nevada sister** developed a huge cyst on her lip that affected her speech not to mention her looks and after waiting many weeks for a consult with a specialist surgeon, accidentally bit the darned thing off, ruining her lunch and requiring an emergency cauterization.

**My poor Idaho sister** developed multiple nasty infections to go with her Crohn's flare up and then just as she improved, a cancer diagnosis.

**Stress can devastate** one's health. I've written before



about how an unfortunately large number of caregivers actually pass *before* the patient. I've mentioned how they are often more depressed than the patient and how they have a death rate 63% higher than their peers. Back then though, I only THOUGHT I understood the stress they faced. Now I KNOW that I know.

**I didn't write all this** to stress YOU out, but to point out to you how crucial volunteers are. Please know that when given the opportunity to provide respite care for a patient so that their caregiver can get away, get some sleep or simply get something done, you are doing more than you can possibly imagine. You could well be saving a life!

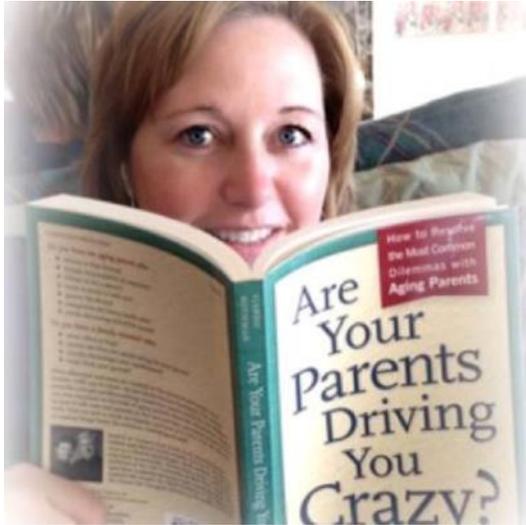
**I'm glad the worst** of it is over for us (I hope!) but I don't begrudge what I learned because now I can better serve hospice families.

Here are a few ideas for helping the caregiver:

- Make sure that you ask after the caregiver's health and well-being.
- Express your admiration that he/she has willingly taken on this role and stuck with it.
- Express your understanding of how hard it can be.
- Allow them time to open up and share the difficult parts without fear of judgment.
- Laugh with them over the humorous aspects of care giving.
- Ask how you can lighten their burdens.
- Often times, they won't come up with anything, so mention specifics that you would be delighted to assist with.
- Follow through!
- Let them know how it helps *you* when they allow you to serve..

And We Thought We Knew continued from page 5

We can never alleviate all their stress, but we can certainly lighten their caregiving load. *That's Inspiration!*



{ Not only is this a very helpful book for those dealing with aging parents, but it brought a much needed laugh when my hubby snapped the photo and shared it with my sisters. }

~ Loralee

## Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our services.

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A NEWSLETTER FOR INSPIRATION HOSPICE VOLUNTEERS  
Amber Osborn, editor Published monthly

## THE RULES FOR BEING AMAZING

RISK MORE THAN IS REQUIRED. LEARN MORE THAN IS NORMAL.  
BE **STRONG.** SHOW **COURAGE.**  
**BREATHE. EXCEL. LOVE. LEAD.**  
SPEAK YOUR **TRUTH.** LIVE YOUR VALUES.  
LAUGH. CRY. INNOVATE. **SIMPLIFY.**  
**ADORE MASTERY.** RELEASE MEDIOCRITY.  
AIM FOR **GENIUS.** STAY HUMBLE.  
**BE KINDER THAN EXPECTED.**  
DELIVER MORE THAN IS NEEDED.  
EXUDE **PASSION.** SHATTER YOUR LIMITS. TRANSCEND YOUR FEARS.  
**INSPIRE OTHERS** BY YOUR BIGNESS.  
**DREAM BIG BUT START SMALL.**  
ACT NOW. **CHANGE** THE WORLD.  
**DON'T STOP.**