

CHARACTER



Compassion/Caring

April 2004

COMPASSION/CARING: “the deep feeling of sharing the suffering of another...to sympathize with.”
“The best portion of a good person’s life is the little nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and love.”

William Wordsworth

Someone once said, “Everyone has a heart. If you can reach it, you can make a difference!” This month’s newsletter is on Caring and Compassion. In one of my college classes the professor asked us what the opposite of love was. Some guessed hate, others revenge and still others dislike. He went on to tell us the opposite of love is fear.

Marianne Williamson in her book “A Return to Hope” states, “We are taught a very negative view of the world that contradicts who we really are. We are taught to think thoughts like competition, struggle, sickness, finite resources, limitation, guilt and pride- as a result we begin to know these first hand. We are taught that things like earning grades, being good enough, having money, and doing things the proper way, are more important than love, trust and confidence. We are taught that we’re separate from other people, that we have to compete to get ahead, that we’re not quite good enough the way we are. We are taught to see the world as others come to see it. The thinking of the world began pounding in our ears almost the moment we hit shore. Love is what we were born with. Fear is what we have learned here.”

In Mother Teresa’s statement “We Believe in Being True” she speaks of being kind, caring, happy and giving the best we have, no matter what others say or do, because that is who we really are. She says, “People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centered; Forgive them anyway. If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you; Be honest and frank anyway. What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight; Build anyway. If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous; Be happy anyway. Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough; Give the best you’ve got anyway.”

Our actions have consequences. If we are kind to others and compassionate as we deal with each other, we can make a difference. We are all interrelated and interconnected. William George Jordan said, “No good act performed in the world ever dies. Science tells us that no atom of matter can ever be destroyed, that no force once started ever ends; it merely passes through a multiplicity of ever changing phases. Every good deed done to others is a great force that starts an unending pulsation through time and eternity. We may not know it, we may never hear a word of gratitude or recognition, but it will come back to us

in some form as naturally, as perfectly, as inevitably, as echo answers to sound.”

Caring and compassion are important in all areas of our lives. Especially as we relate to children and as we live, love and learn in our own families. Lilian Katz has stated, “Each of us must come to care about someone else’s children. We must recognize that the welfare of our children and grandchildren is intimately linked to the welfare of all other people’s children. After all, when one of our children needs lifesaving surgery, someone else’s child will perform it. If one of our children is threatened or harmed by violence, someone else’s child will be responsible for the violent act. The good life for our own children can be secured only if a good life is also secured for all other people’s children.”

Barbara Bush in her 1990 commencement address at Wellesley College reminds us, as important as your obligation as a doctor, a lawyer, or a business leader may be, your human connection with your spouse, your children, and your friends are the most important investments you will ever make. “At the end of your life you will never regret not having passed one more test, not winning one more verdict, or not closing one more deal. But you will regret time not spent with your spouse, your children, or your friends.”

Each day gives us an opportunity anew to make choices as to whether we will be caring, kind and loving or rude, indifferent and mean. Marvin J. Ashton in October 1974 suggests, “The attitude with which we approach each day controls the outcome. We must be more concerned with what we do with what happens to us, than to what happens to us.” George Bernard Shaw said it well, “I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the community and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die. For the harder I work, the more I live!” May we use our lives up, in serving, helping and supporting those around us, in our neighborhoods, our schools, our churches and our homes, thereby creating a community of healthy, caring, loving individuals.

*Renee Condie
Lindon Resident*

If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain;
If I can ease one life the aching,
Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin
Unto his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.
–Emily Dickinson

“We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.”
--Winston Churchill

“Keep in mind that the true measure of an individual is how he treats a person who can do him absolutely no good.”
Ann Landers

Book List

Somebody Loves You Mr. Hatch

by Eileen Spinelli

The Giving Tree

by Shel Silverstein

The Wolf's Chicken Stew

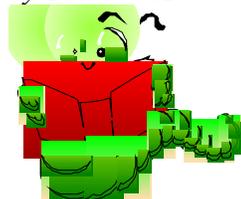
by Keiko Kasca

Miss Maggie

by Cynthia Rylant

Now One Foot, Now the Other

by Tomie dePaola



Family Activities

–**Plant a garden.** *Talk about the fruits that can come from seeds of kindness or compassion.*

–**Tell the story of “Jack and the Beanstalk” from the giant’s point of view.** Look through binoculars, first through the small end, then through the large end. *What does seeing the world through another’s point of view have to do with being compassionate?*

–**Booker T. Washington, American educator,** was born on April 5, 1856. He founded Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, a school where trades such as carpentry, farming, and mechanics were taught. He worked for the economic betterment of blacks. *What members of our society will be benefitted as we turn our compassion into action?*

By Laura Clement

Kid’s Corner

Often we think of the words compassion and caring in relation to people. But all living things need to be cared for. I have a cousin who raises sheep. Every spring some of the mother sheep die while giving birth to their young. Often these lambs survive the birthing process, but face great odds of dying without a mother to care for them. It is at these times that my cousin becomes a surrogate mother. Caring for these baby lambs is very demanding. Each must be bottle fed often which results in my cousin losing sleep. But the many hours of sacrifice are well worth it as she watches the lambs begin to grow and ultimately thrive.

My neighbor planted a garden last year. One of the seeds sprang up near a large rock. He watched the little squash plant struggle to survive. He worried about that little squash plant. He moved it to better ground but worried that it would not survive the transplanting. He nurtured it along and even prayed over it. Some would say that a squash plant is quite an insignificant thing to spend so much time worrying over. I think, however, that there is a great lesson in this. If we will care about the small things around us, we will be more inclined to show compassion to things we consider more significant.

Brad Nichols, 10th grade
Pleasant Grove High School

We, at Character Connection would like to focus on helping parents access character materials this year by using the web site located at www.thecharacterconnection.com. If you are interested in receiving a monthly reminder of the character traits and access to resource materials, please e-mail your address to arlainea@isquaredinc.com

Character Connection is a not-for-profit organization encouraging the enhancement of character development in our community. We are accepting financial support, if you can help please send contributions to:

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c/o Alpine Foundation
575 N 100 E

American Fork, UT 84003
(You may also give your donation to any executive board member.)

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