

Lindon

CHARACTER

Connection



Generosity

May 2013

“Generosity: “the liberality or willingness in giving; unselfishness.”

From the time we began our first lessons in elementary school to the date of our high school graduations and beyond, we were taught the basic virtue of generosity or what used to also be called liberality. We learned that when we shared that which we’d been given, whether it was our means, our time, or our talents—with no expectation of recognition or reward—we were helping another person experience the good things that life can bring.

When I think of generosity, I think of another term with a similar meaning: large-heartedness. We have the ability to respond to the actions of others in any way we choose. There may be times in which we feel that we’ve been mistreated, unappreciated, or taken advantage of by others. Sometimes what we experience is simply a misunderstanding. We have the ability to take the high road and seek for the best in ourselves and others, despite our own feelings. When we refuse to be offended and are willing to forgive one another for a mistake made—whether intentional or otherwise—we are showing large-heartedness and are contributing to a stronger sense of community among our friends, neighbors, and even those who are strangers to us.

That is a type of generosity that is much needed in the world today.

Often we see other great examples of generosity when members of a community come together in the midst of a natural disaster, an extreme weather event, or any situation which rallies the community to unite to accomplish something needful. People who see a need are willing to bring their expertise, experience, and strong backs to the aid of others in difficulty.

Thirty years ago, over Memorial Day weekend of 1983, spring thaws and unseasonably warm weather brought flooding waters over the banks of City Creek in Salt Lake City. As many will remember, thousands of volunteers assisted as the flood waters were routed down

city streets until they could reach an area which could handle the heavy flows. State Street became a river for several days and pedestrians crossed over on wooden bridges. People filled innumerable sand bags along the route and helped in any way they could to keep the waters in check.

As a student at the University of Utah at the time and with a job taking me downtown each day, I watched it all unfold. It was an amazing feat. I felt a sense of community along with the hundreds of groups and thousands of individuals that were willing to be generous with their time and skills to keep a bad situation from becoming worse. Ultimately, the efforts of so many were successful and a potential severe flooding situation was averted.

These highly-visible acts of service and generosity encourage all of us to be involved and to do more than we otherwise might.

More often, however, it is the quiet generosity of individuals in our community that really makes the difference. The willingness of a neighbor or friend to assist an elderly individual with meals, shopping, or household chores; the work of volunteers who provide labor and materials in remodeling a home; the services of professionals provided free of charge to individuals in need; and the extra-mile efforts of an employee who helps a customer with a difficult problem. These ongoing efforts—outside the limelight and usually unknown to most—make our community what it is.

May we as parents and grandparents—as young adults, teenagers, and children—show by our examples what generosity really can do for our community. The best teacher of future generations is what we as individuals and families demonstrate each day through the attitudes we carry and the service we provide to others.

Matt Bean, Lindon City Councilman

Book List



“The Quiltmaker’s Gift”

by Jeff Brumbeau

“The Library”

by Sarah Stewart

Family Activities

- Said Robert of Doncaste, “What I gave I have, what I spent I had; and what I left I lost.” *Discuss this quote as a family.*
- *Play “Hot Potato” and talk about the idea of love not being love until you give it away.*
- Make a family treat and share it with a neighbor.
- Johns Hopkins was born on May 19, 1795. When his family (Quakers) freed their slaves, Johns ended his formal education to help on the family plantation. In 1812, he worked for his uncle in the grocery business. Johns was soon a prominent wholesale grocer in Baltimore. His wise investments in banking and railroads also brought rich returns. He left his fortune to establish the internationally renowned Johns Hopkins University and Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Kid’s Corner

During this economic downturn, this is an important characteristic to be aware of and improve upon. We live in one of the most prosperous nations on the earth. Most of us have enough and some to spare.

We can donate clothes, used furniture and other household items to DI for the needy. The earthquake in China, as well as many disasters of the past, helps us be concerned about meeting the basic needs of other humans in distress. We can donate to trustworthy organizations that will help provide shelter and blankets.

We can participate in food drives to be sure that the hungry have what they need to survive. We can donate money to worthy causes to support and promote good around us. Most of us can regularly donate blood at blood drives. We can donate our time and volunteer service to others in need.

Cleaning a park, contributing to scouting, tutoring a child, visiting a lonely elderly person....there is no end to the wonderful works of good we can do for others. The best part about having a generous heart is what good it does for you!

Natalie, Lindon Student

Thoughts on Generosity

“It’s not giving me that which I need more than you do, but it is giving me that which you need more than I do.”

Kahil Gibran

“All my experience of the world teaches me that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the safe and just side of a question is the generous and merciful side.”

Anna Jameson

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Lindon Character Connection is a not-for-profit organization encouraging the enhancement of character development in our community. We are accepting volunteer or financial support.

*If you can help please send contributions to:
Lindon Character Connection c/o Lindon City
100 North State St., Lindon, Utah 84042-1808 (You may also give your donation to any executive board member.)*

