



LOPEZ ISLAND
HOME &
HOSPICE
SUPPORT

Companionship, Caring, & Compassion

A Community Volunteer Service

Help Is Closer Than You Think

by Mary Miller

"Need crutches? Go to the shed at Lopez Island Home and Hospice Support." You may be one of those people who has had to borrow crutches or a walker from what we used to call "the hospice office," but until you have a real emergency you probably don't know just what LIHHS can actually offer you.

On November 30th of last year, Steve, my husband of 54 years, caught his shoe on the kitchen rug. He went down like a fallen cedar onto our cement floor. It didn't help that he had a large folding knife clipped to his pocket where his femur attaches to his hip. And so it goes. As we have aged here on Lopez, we have been made increasingly aware of our remoteness from easily accessible health care and services. Our medics were soon here, however, and Steve was flown to Bellingham to receive excellent care. Sadly, because of Covid restrictions he was isolated for the first time in our long marriage.

I also felt isolated. Every major decision in our life has been made as a team. Our collaboration with each other has been one of the great blessings of my life. Then, when he was moved to a rehab facility, and still isolated, the problems of this new life began to dawn on me. How was I going to get him home? How could he get up the steps to the front door? Who could I turn to to build a ramp? How much would it cost? What about a walker? My friend Levanne Hendrix reminded me of LIHHS, saying, "I think they even have grant dollars for a ramp."

Approaching the office as a needy woman could have been awkward for me. I'm usually the one offering the help. But Office Manager Sarah Rabel and Client Services Manager Wendy McClure welcomed me like the flowers in May. I was granted a check for the ramp. I borrowed a walker, a set of crutches, an extended-reach shoe horn, a grabber, and was offered much more. My thanks couldn't start to repay the

unconditional generosity that soothed my worried soul. Three weeks later we brought my honey home. Lopez Island Home and Hospice Support, Thank you!

LIHHS in the Community

by Nora McCloy

The newsletter allows us to take a moment to remind you of the many diverse ways we provide home support services to our community. Look also for our new brochure that highlights these services as well as the ways you can participate and support our efforts.

Many of you are aware of our Durable Medical Equipment inventory. Need crutches, or a walker, or a toilet seat riser? For the short or long term? We are here for you.

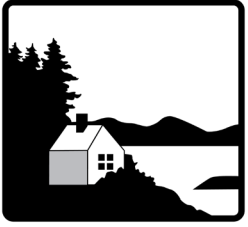
Need some company, conversation, or help with light chores at home? A dump run or a grocery or medication pick up? We are here for you.

Need grab bars or a ramp installed at home? Our small grant program might be just the ticket, and we are here for you to help with the associated costs.

We are also here for you as the larger community learns more about the challenges we face today: isolation, memory loss, loneliness, declining health, and depression. Come find our LIHHS bookshelf at the Lopez Library where you can access great reading materials and information about how to better understand the situation you or a family member may be facing. And we invite you to visit our website www.lihhs.org for past newsletter articles on various topics.

We are also here for you in times of grieving. Please contact our office if you would like to learn more about our bereavement support.

We invite you to call or email the office if we can be of help: We are here for you!



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Lopez Island
Home & Hospice
Support is a 501(c)(3)
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organization. All
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How to Donate

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*Many thanks for your
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*We Are Here For You!
Home support, durable medical equipment,
small grants, & bereavement support*

Summer 2022

Kindness Contagion Improves Lives

by Elizabeth Landrum, Ph.D.

Unexpected kindness is the most powerful, least costly, and most underrated agent of human change. — Bob Kerrey

In times of uncertainty, turmoil, and division, the practice of kindness may be more important than ever. Of course, even the best-intentioned of us are not capable of perpetual kindness, and human beings are not wired for constancy of feeling or conduct, but consideration and generosity can be tools to promote a more just and loving world. Our kindnesses can help move each of us away from overwhelm, anger, and despair, and in these trying times, we need to do what we can to stay balanced and emotionally solid. Kindness is not a cure, but it is good medicine—a way of being that can make a difference. Social scientists are currently studying its effects and have demonstrated that kindness toward others, and to ourselves, helps balance seesawing emotions, improves overall health, and extends positive social networks.

Kindness starts with being kind to ourselves

Numerous studies have shown that self-compassion is important for mental and emotional well-being and even plays a role in our physical health. Feeling a connection with the rest of humanity is a core component of self-compassion. To fully give to others, we need to give to ourselves.

Self-compassion involves: a) mindfulness, or being aware of negative thoughts, feelings and experiences without judging or dwelling on them; b) recognizing that we are all imperfect and that we all suffer; and c) self-kindness, especially when we run into those all-too-human imperfections. (A handy check is to ask yourself if you would talk to a good friend like you talk to yourself, then adjust your self-talk.)

Lead with compassion, follow with kindness

When we are compassionate, we're recognizing our shared human condition with an understanding that everyone lives with losses, as well as with their fears of losing more. No matter what our beliefs, we are all schooled in the stories that surround us, and we all find ways to have our stories affirmed. Still, a hero in one person's story may look just like the villain in another's.

Kindness is not only about actions. It's also about empathy and understanding, about recognizing the struggles of others, their stories, and how all humans function within a set of reinforced beliefs. Compassion will often guide us into charitable action; practicing generosity can make us more compassionate.

Kindness begets kindness

Just as a bully can foster a culture of bullying and fear, so can one person's considerateness help to foster the same in others. Kindness builds bridges: two-way bridges. According to Jamil Zaki, a Stanford Psychology professor who writes on the topic (*The War for Kindness: Building Empathy in a Fractured World*), people imitate not only the particulars of positive actions, but also the spirit underlying them. Many different studies have found that people "pay it forward." If they receive kindness, or even observe generosity, they are then kinder and more generous to others.

It doesn't seem to matter how people witness a kind act. Whether they read about it, watch a TV show where characters act altruistically, or are actually present when someone helps another, the effect is the same—they act more generously afterward. In other words, people resonate with the underlying reason for doing good and become motivated themselves to spread the beneficence. Kindness, then, is contagious.

No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted. — Aesop

We are happier when we act in service to others

There is a positive correlation between the number of considerate acts one does and happiness. In experiments, kindness to strangers, to people one knows, and to oneself, as well as observing acts of kindness, have equally positive effects on happiness. Research also shows that the benefits of kindness are greater for the giver than the receiver. Giving compliments actually makes people happier than receiving them, and surprisingly, people are largely unaware of these hedonic benefits.

Neuropsychological research confirms that the act of being kind releases a range of natural "feel-good" hormones in our bodies, including oxytocin and endorphins, as the activity of our brain's fear center declines. Therefore, practicing kindness and compassion can reduce stress, make us happier, and boost our immune systems. This practice is so effective it's being formally incorporated into some types of psychotherapy.

Why does simply giving compliments boost our happiness to such a degree? Social connection plays an important role. Giving compliments engenders a stronger social connection than receiving compliments because giving them encourages people to focus on the other person. Simply thinking about others makes for connection, and as awareness leads to action, more positive communities can be built around many small acts of thoughtfulness.

The power of an act of kindness

Kindness is not something that demands hard work or vast amounts of time, yet its power and benefits are immense, sometimes with lasting effects. Each of us might recall a single act of kindness that had a noticeable impact in our lives and that may have motivated us to "pay it forward" in some way.

Kindheartedness is most beneficial as something we work on with awareness and practice, even through the daily practice of small kindnesses. Every act creates a ripple effect with no predictable end.

Kindness: the quality of being friendly, generous, helpful, and considerate (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Another good reminder that "what we pay attention to grows." There is no doubt that kindness is one of the invisible global currencies of happiness, health, and success in this world, and it is consistently available for us to choose.

We can't heal the world today, but we can begin with a voice of compassion, a heart of love, an act of kindness. — Mary Davis

Dementia Support

Conversations and questions with no right or wrong answers, like discussions on movies, can encourage the sharing of memories, thoughts, and feelings from people living with dementia. This message came through at two recent events focused on living well with dementia.

A session led by Marigrace Becker, Program Manager at the UW Medicine Memory and Brain Wellness Center, focused on the basics of dementia, including tips for communication and how the creative arts can play a special role in health and well-being.

A follow-up event, "Meet Me at the Movies," was an interactive film program designed for people living with dementia and led by Mary Jane Knecht from The Frye Art Museum in Seattle. Mary Jane showed four film clips and launched a dialog of inspired recollections.

The two events were organized by the Frye Art Museum with co-hosts LIHHS, The Hamlet, LIFRC, Senior Services, and San Juan County Health. Special thanks to Kip Greenthal for fostering this wonderful opportunity.

Volunteer With LIHHS

We are currently seeking additional volunteers and planning an upcoming training. Our volunteers offer a variety of home support services to Lopez neighbors in need. If you are interested, please contact our office at 360-468-4446 or admin@lihhs.org. Thank you for helping us help our community!

LIHHS Staffing Changes

At the end of April, we bid farewell to Client Services Manager Wendy McClure, who stepped down to help with care for an aging family member. With great gratitude to Wendy for her important work, we will sorely miss her. Client and volunteer support coordination will be covered in the interim by Sarah Rabel and LIHHS Board Member Sheryl Mercer.



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Summer 2022