



Giving Back Because of Thanks

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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When my mom died I "inherited" boxes and boxes of black and white photos. Many of them showed soldiers in uniform with their arms around her. I really don't know who these men were but remember the powerful stories that she told about how many of her friends went off to war and never returned. They were committed to serving our country and seeing other lands but, at the same time, like most youth were naïve about the price they would pay. In fact, many small Saskatchewan towns lost great numbers and cenotaphs with their engraved names were erected in remembrance.

Mom was always so thankful for the work of the Red Cross. She taught school for thirty-five years and throughout her career she honoured this organization for the work that they did during the war.

I will never forget the project that she set up to raise money for the Red Cross using only a handful of items and her grade two class of seven-year olds.

Do you remember the small old-fashioned wooden apple baskets that used to be found in grocery stores? Well, mom would place a half dozen small items such as a jello powder, can of soup or small package of cookies into the basket. She used a marker to write the price on each item. Then she prepared a letter to add to the basket. It stated that the children were raising money to send to the Red Cross and encouraged each potential purchaser to buy one item, put the stated amount in a small container in the basket and replace the item with one from their own pantry.

The children were so excited to have a turn to take the "travelling basket" home for the evening so that they could canvas their neighbourhood. She assigned the task in pairs and ensured that they understood how to be polite and clear about their task.

Over the years, the children raised thousands of dollars and the Red Cross always sent their thanks with photos of wheelchairs that were purchased with the money. Mom would post them on the bulletin board in the classroom so that the children would understand the importance of their work.

This project promoted so many skills and values for the children in addition to the benefits for the Red Cross.

Mom's idea and her wonderful stories about the soldiers who fought for our freedom have stayed with me throughout my life.

As a psychologist, I have been honoured to work with Veterans who have returned from battle carrying the scars of war in their minds and hearts.

November 11th is a very important day. Make sure that you take time to quietly remind yourself that our freedom was not a free gift. It cost a lot for so many and we will never be able to repay the price in full. However, you can be like Mom and figure out a way to give back - even in a small way.

Think about a way that you can make the world a better place and lace your actions with thankfulness.