

## Let's make a habit of showing kindness to others

**Mark Pavilons**



We all want our lives to mean something.

Many people have amassed a long list of accomplishments, and a resume worth boasting about. Some are renowned philanthropists and others are at the top of their game in sports or entertainment.

For us average folk, all we can do is try to live our lives well, be compassionate, raise decent kids and touch some hearts along the way.

A legacy like that is pretty decent if you ask me.

I'm very proud of my kids, especially my oldest daughter Lexie, who just turned 20.

She's in her second year at Western, taking advanced humanities. She's hoping for a career in international aid, perhaps working for an NGO or even the United Nations!

Her compassion seems limitless.

Around the holidays, Lexie and her mom invited a homeless man into a diner for a meal and cup of coffee.

The day after Valentine's Day, she went to volunteer at a women's shelter near her school in London.

This year, instead of birthday gifts, she posted a link online to a gofundme page to raise money for a young woman in Kenya, to help her with her post-secondary costs. Lexie spent three weeks in Kenya, as part of a Me to We/Free the Children volunteer adventure.

They spent some time working with the locals and helping to build a school and medical complex.

The participants were quite engaged, and put to work mixing concrete and smashing rocks, in order to build a school foundation.

They learned Swahili. They also learned, first-hand (or should I say first-head) about the arduous task of carrying water from its source to the village.

The group visited the Kishon health centre to learn about We charities health pillar. They were given a tour of the welcome room, the doctors offices, the lab, the pharmacy, the emergency room, the optometrists, and finally the beautiful convalescence garden.

Lexie is itching to get out there and help some more. This spring, she hopes to travel to Guatemala, via International Volunteer Headquarters, which organizes student aid trips abroad. It seems helping others is in her blood.

(<https://www.gofundme.com/lexies-humanitarian-mission-trip>)

I am pleased that our planet is in the hands of young people like her.

Lexie is one to totally immerse herself in local culture. She's never an "outsider," but rather an active participant who wants to know everything about a culture and help with their unique trials and tribulations.

I have no doubt she would give everything she has to help, and make a difference.

I have received a number of notes and emails telling me what a wonderful soul Lexie is. Some have congratulated me for raising such a giving young woman. I don't really know how I impacted her in this manner. My wife and I simply instill fundamental notions and values. And we always encouraged our kids to follow their hearts, supporting them with all that we have.

It hasn't been easy, since some of Lexie's missions trips have been costly. But with help from my friends in King and a supportive extended family, we managed to send her abroad.

I think Lexie will be an amazing ambassador some day. She may never be really wealthy, but I know her life will have meaning

and her legacy will be remembered for a long time.

Our daughter is not really unique. Almost weekly I come across King residents who rise above challenges, go out of their way to help others, and pitch in for some great causes.

Residents are rallying around Pottageville resident Marjolaine Alexandre, a single mother who was seriously injured in a car accident. A gofundme page is quickly nearing its goal, thanks to the generosity of strangers. A fundraising event is being held Saturday, Feb. 24 at The Scruffy Duck in Schomberg, starting at 7 p.m. It's sure to be a fun-filled night, all for a very good cause. I received King resident Len Mizzoni's CD last week ???Waves of Indigo.?? One song, 'Be Kind' not only made me smile, but filled me with a sense of optimism, of contributing to the human race in a positive way. He said it was inspired by Ellen DeGeneres, who ends every show with the phrase 'Be kind to one another.'

She's right of course. Kindness in us all to give, freely!

Random acts of kindness abound all across King on a regular basis.

Residents of Kingscross came together almost instantly to help a motorist whose vehicle was stuck in a ditch. I know some of the residents in that neighbourhood, and I know they always lend a hand, or come together for a great cause. It's what they do.

These days, we create goals and make some crazy to-do lists. But most of these plans forget about our fundamental nature and values of living. We need to embrace others; contribute; share and offer a hand up when called upon. We need to love, build bridges and fix what's broken.

Be kind to one another, always! It's never too late to give.