

## Embrace the kind souls you encounter!

Mark Pavilons

There are tremendous opportunities to learn all around us. Life is one big skill-testing question and we can do well, if we only take the time to look, listen and absorb



The best thing about any community is its people. Human beings and all that comes with them, are our best natural resource. The fact that we're so unique means we're also a rare commodity in this universe. That, in itself, is something to embrace.

There are parts of my job that I just love. My faith in my fellow men and women has become strong again, largely due to the people I've encountered in this municipality.

Even when I first arrived and got a warm welcome from Mayor Pellegrini and council, I thought people can't really be that nice, can they?

Don't get me wrong, I've encountered thousands of 'nice' people during my career and only a smidgen of bad sorts. There have been some goofballs, idiots and unbelievably self-centred donkeys. Like some of you out there, I have literally seen it all.

And that's why it's so comforting and refreshing to meet real, genuine, caring people. The unexpected thing is, every week I encounter even more.

I've been doing a series of articles on King's volunteer firefighters over the past few months. Fire Chief Jim Wall wanted to increase the visibility of his men and women in uniform and promote their recruitment. I don't think either of us knew it would snowball into an ongoing look into the lives of those who serve.

If you don't personally know a firefighter, you may have your own ideas and opinions about the type of people they are. I didn't know what to expect when this series began. Boy has it become interesting!

'I'm just a firefighter,' said veteran King City volunteer Renzo Cescolini. From my recent experience, there's no such thing as 'just a firefighter.' But he was quite sincere about it.

And that really made me think. Who puts on 100 pounds of equipment and rushes into a burning building? Who spends an hour cutting someone out of a vehicle and then performs CPR on them to try to bring them back?

Captain Jerry Binsfield has been doing this for more than 30 years. That in itself is a testament to commitment. These days, the captain says he loves hanging around the younger firefighters, feeding off of their enthusiasm and soaking in their excitement. He finds it 'inspiring.'

We all hear negative stories about the younger generation and its apparent lack of commitment and selflessness. Well, Jerry will tell you it isn't so. There are some really good, dedicated, caring people at the fire halls in King. Their compassion and sense of community is contagious.

And that's a very good thing. This is something you can't put a price on, or teach or foster. It's inherent in these individuals.

And none of them, despite the plaques and awards, ever ask for a pat on the back. They don't even make a big deal about meeting those they've saved in those awful situations.

I ran into a rather modest artist last week, who spent two years working on a metal sculpture of a life-size horse. He created this beautiful piece out of metal rebar, one of the most unforgiving substances there is.

Kendall McCulloch undertook this task as a personal challenge. While he loves showing it to people, it's not about glory, fame or

recognition. He is simply overwhelmed that it turned out well and that other people enjoy it.

During our conversation it dawned on me that Kendall is just a genuine, friendly person, not to mention talented. His smile is contagious and I left his property feeling good.

I could create a list a mile long of King residents I've met who've been accommodating, informative, courteous, generous, kind and passionate. Of course, every community has them, but we don't always get a chance to meet them or see them in action. I do.

From the local movers and shakers to members of the agricultural society; from local business people to volunteers of the King Township Food Bank, there are countless souls who've made it their mission to give back.

And most of them don't even realize how special that is. Do they fully appreciate the domino effect that such giving can have? Well, let me tell you that it does have an impact. And yes, doing good can change the world.

When I think of the firefighters and the young recruits, someone along the way must have given them a guiding hand, a decent amount of morals, ethics and kindness. And they're sharing it all.

We are all the beneficiaries of those who came before us. Each one of us is a human being and has a story to tell, and has faced our own challenges. Our experiences have made us who we are.

So, the onus is on us to continue this trend, and pass on all that we know and hold dear, to future generations.

We do this without thinking with our own children and family members.

But we do it in so many other ways, too. By volunteering, coming to the aid of a neighbour, saying thank you to a local firefighter and supporting local Lions, we are making a statement.

Alone, maybe we can't change the world. But together, look out!

To all those I've met and have made a difference, I thank you!