

This I believe

A fire starts in a grassy area near a farm; it quickly escalates out of control so the farmer calls the Fire Department. Upon arrival the Professional fire department agrees more help is needed, the only other help in the area is the volunteer fire department. Despite some doubt, from both the farmer and the professionals the call was made to the volunteers. While the professional fire department was attempting to put out the fire, the volunteers arrived quickly in a dilapidated old fire truck, rumbled straight toward the fire and drove right into the middle of the flames and stopped. All the volunteers jump out and immediately began spraying water in all directions. And soon the blaze was broken into smaller easily controlled parts. Watching in amazement, the farmer was so impressed and grateful that his farm had been saved, he gave the volunteers \$1000 as a gift of thanks. The story made the local news; the reporter asked the volunteers "What are you going to do with the money?" The volunteers replied, "That should be obvious, the first thing we are going to do is get the brakes fix on our truck!"

But seriously, volunteering is not a joke and it doesn't happen on accident; it is a choice. Volunteering does not always have to be planned; but I believe it does have to be a responsibility. **I believe that by volunteering I can make a positive difference in someone's life.** I believe that a selfless simple random act of kindness, that takes just moments, can have an impact that lasts a lifetime. Sally Koch reminds us that "great opportunities to help others seldom come but small ones surround us everyday." This is why I believe in the way we warmly greet each other here in church on Sunday, with a friendly, approving smile; caring eye contact; a confident hand shake; a secure hug; an encouraging word and accepting listening ear; and the way we approvingly applaud shows honest praise for something well done. The smallest acts of kindness and caring have the potential to change a life.

I think of myself as a positive person. What I haven't figured out is; do I volunteer because I am a positive person or am I a positive person because I volunteer. Either way volunteering is important to me because it keeps my life positive. Through volunteering I notice progress and experience the good that is happening in our community. When I volunteer a random act of kindness; I have instant gratification, positive feed back that lets me know immediately that I have made a positive difference. I know that whatever I volunteer someone benefits; that makes me feel good and keeps me thinking positive.

I strived to be the best I can be; by putting thought and effort into what ever I'm doing. When I became a mother, I wondered; how was I going to be the best mom I could be. I came across a poem that is titled Children Learn What They Live by: Dorothy Law Nolte. Right away I realized this poem was more than a simply stated guide of principles. This was my answer; I would put thought and effort into practicing her words. The values that she writes about would become a part of my daily life and would encouraged and guide me to become a better person and the mom I wanted to be.

When my girls wanted to play soccer, was the first time I volunteered to be a coach. I was faced with that similar question again, how was I going to be the best coach I could be? I didn't know anything about soccer; then I remembered the poem, it was simple. I had made a conscious decision everyday to practice those values; I choose to make them a part of my daily life. I would coach what I knew. I knew how to coach friendliness; encouragement and praise, to show acceptance and approval, I recognized the good in every girl. I wanted to make a difference in their lives by coaching them in sharing, honestly and fairness. I showed them kindness and consideration because I wanted them to believe in themselves. I volunteered so they would have what they needed. Yet it was me that got something I wasn't expecting. By volunteering I felt I had purpose; it was a benefit to me to feel needed, appreciated and valued. I felt good knowing that I had contributed. I felt the satisfaction of accomplishment, and I gained confidence. I was supposed to be teaching them, yet it was me that learned something new. In addition I made new friends; and maybe without knowing I inspired others by being a role model. I had definitely made a difference. I knew then that volunteering not only makes life better for those around me but makes life better for me too. I believe by volunteering I can make a positive difference in the life of my children, my husband, my family, my friends, my community, my country and my world. Do I believe I can change the world? The way I think of it-To the world I maybe only one person; but by volunteering, to one person I maybe the world. With each thing I volunteer, I believe I am changing a life and I know that I have made a positive difference in at least one life; my own.

Volunteering makes me feel that I am part of a team. Now, I know you have heard the saying there is no I in team – Spell volunteering, V-O-L-U-N-T-E-E-R-I-N-G
There is U (you) and I in volunteering. You and I have a responsibility to do what ever we can. There are so many wonderful things that won't happen if we don't do them. Volunteering begins with a choice, but is ultimately a responsibility of all people to help each other. First be responsible for yourself, always be your best because "people" learn from what they live. Like a candle we all have our own light. It is our responsibility to volunteer and share that light with others who are in need. Give others what they need to shine. Kahlil Gibran helps us realize that we have nothing to loss by volunteering when he said," a candle losses nothing of its own light when lighting another." Offer your light if another needs it. They will do the same; and some day when it's you that needs the help, it will be there for you.

By: Linda Daily

(*Volunteer; you have nothing to lose except sleep)

