

# Editorial Comments

By Katie Shepherd

~What kind of person are you?? I don't mean in regards to male, female, black, white or otherwise but the YOU- the real you- the person you are deep down inside? Are you the kind of person that generally looks at the good in people? The one that if needed would be there to help your fellow man, putting aside your needs for another? Or are you instead the kind that merely thinks of yourself with little or no regard for those around you? We all know them, that person that would rather wear their blinders than realize that their actions caused harm or hardship to another individual??

While I don't consider myself to be an expert on people and **God** only knows I am far from perfect myself- I would like to think that overall I am the type of person that could be counted on. The one that sees the good in others- and while I do constantly remind my 14 year old daughter that I too am a person and that I also have needs- I'd like to think that for the **MOST** part I would put aside those needs in consideration of a fellow human being.

Some time back I had the pleasure of witnessing a kind act and it has stayed with me ever since. While traveling I made a quick stop in a fast food restaurant. I was standing in line when I started hearing those around me making sounds of disgust by another's actions. "Gross" one woman said "do you see that?" Before I had the opportunity to ascertain what they were talking about, the man in front of me stepped out of line and out the door. There standing just outside the window was a homeless man hastily rummaging through the trash, while simultaneously stuffing what food he could find into his mouth. The man, whom had once been standing just in front of me, gently led this individual into the restaurant and sat him in a booth by the window. He then returned to the line and proceeded to order not only his meal but another two meals for this needy man.

Were the actions of this homeless man gross? **Absolutely!** But then how many of us have ever been so hungry that we would even consider such measures? When was the last time we missed a meal- not because we were too busy to stop to eat or because we desired to lose a pound or two- but rather because we were so destitute, so far beyond hunger, that we would even resort to such desperate actions in the first place? The homeless man wasn't begging. He asked nothing of those around him and while we can all assume he made his choice or that he should get a job the fact that he needed food that badly should have been each of ours first concern. One dear friend recently told me "I'd rather lend a hand than point a finger" I love those comments and certainly this was a time "that hand" was needed.

So what about flip side- the individual that thinks of nobody **BUT** their self? It's true, to some extent the woman that voiced her disgust over the homeless man was not thinking of others- but I'm referring to those individuals that blatantly put their needs before anyone else. We've been down this road before. The man that makes an illegal turn in an attempt to jump ahead of other parents in the school drop off line or that person that rudely purchases a weeks worth of groceries in the "10 item or less line". (Oh I forgot that was the same person) You know what I'm talking about and I'm sure we each have an example of someone whose all out rudeness is beyond our comprehension.

Such is the case with a woman that works in the plaza where Lice Solutions is located. Having recently gone on oxygen she now proudly displays her handicap sticker. I say proudly because for her it seems more like a sense of accomplishment than an actual need. True she has the handicap sticker, but how handicap is she really and one has to wonder how she even qualified in the first place. While I'm in no way trying to discredit those individuals that are forced to live their life depending on the use of an oxygen tank, for her it is more a badge of honor. No bigger than a thermos, she carries the tank in her hand. OK so the real problem here is that as a result of this new privilege she has decided that the handicap parking space immediately outside our non profit facility, is now her own. Arriving promptly at 8:45 each morning she

backs into this space, straddling both the parking spot and the loading zone, blocking any opportunity to get around her car. Her car then stays there until she leaves at the end of the day effectively shutting down the use of the spot to any other individual. This spot is no longer a handicap space but rather her “very own” private parking spot. I have even jokingly told my staff that if I knew her name I’d make a sign stating that fact. “Private Parking- Ms. Iam Rude ONLY” maybe we should add- All others will be towed! If that weren’t bad enough this woman actually is employed by our landlord!! I have asked them, as I have asked her, if she could please use the spot across the way; as it is never used while ours was used almost daily. “NO WAY” said the woman “I’m on Oxygen! - I have too much to carry!” I tried to explain that we frequently had handicap individuals coming in for treatments and that it was helpful if that spot was available for them. Her response was that THEY could park across the way!! She however intended to stay in that spot- “After all” she added “There are many days that spot wasn’t even used!” Correct me if I’m wrong but isn’t that the intention of a handicap spot- to leave it available for those that really need it??

Repeated attempts to appeal to this woman’s caring side have failed. Even the fact that we have two handicap employees- one with MS and one with Muscular Dystrophy mean nothing to her, nor did the fact that a mother had to push her wheelchair bound 7 year old while trying to keep hold of a 2 year old, across the parking lot. Even as recent as yesterday she stood under our overhang as she waited out the rainstorm while Peter, who has no use of his legs from his knees down, had to manipulate his crutches around her car (remember she blocks the path between the bumpers) in an attempt to reach his awaiting taxi. Continued pleas for consideration have fallen on death ears and the landlord has in his words stated “I’m NOT getting in the handicap business.”

This woman isn’t hurting me- As I stated before I don’t even know her. What she is doing however is hurting all those individuals that truly need the spot far more than she does. While I didn’t make the laws surrounding the use of handicap spaces there is no doubt in my mind that it was never intended to become one individuals private parking or to prevent the use of it by those that truly need it. One thing for sure she has given our office more than its share of laughs as she has become a well worn topic in our facility. We even suggested contacting some organization for the disabled to see if they could have someone occupy the space at 8:30 each morning and stay just long enough for her to park elsewhere!! ☺

~ As I sit here contemplating my recent trip to TN, I can’t help but marvel at the differences in communities across America. Tennessee, much like many other southern states prides itself in a simpler yet honest way of life. Not simple to the point of blissful ignorance but rather simpler in effect to appreciating and enduring what really matters most in life. While priorities vary greatly from person to person they are an essential part of each of our daily lives. For families’ of one Nashville community it meant coming together and reaching out as a community to help one another. No they weren’t recovering from the latest round of natural disasters. No recent flooding or Tornado had wrecked havoc on their community. Instead what brought this group of people together was a sense of need. The birth of a new baby!!

OK you’re right. Babies are born everyday- even in our own community. So how then does it make this community any different? The mother of this newborn had struggled for years to have a child of her own. When all attempts had failed they finally decided to adopt a baby from Russia. Only after returning with their newest addition did she learn that she was now pregnant as well. The babies’, close enough in age to eventually be mistaken for twins, have now blessed this family two fold. However as is true with many blessing there is often a down side. In the case of this new family it was how they were going to adjust to caring for one young baby while having just given birth to another. The neighbors recognizing the hardship and sharing in her joy joined forces and devised a schedule whereby each neighbor was responsible for supplying this family with a complete dinner. With all neighbors on board they had ensured that neither mom nor dad had to worry about the next day’s meal, for at least the next four weeks!! Wouldn’t it be great if all neighbors held close to heart such fundamental needs and made time to set aside their own desires in an attempt to think of another.

~Now as we prepare for the Thanksgiving holiday I remind each of you to take time to think of others. Take time to rejoice in the many blessing we enjoy each day and remember there are always those less fortunate – even within our own neighborhood. I wish each of you a wonderful holiday and encourage you to make it a time to care and a time to share! Finally I ask- what can you do to help another?

~Till next month, I once again challenge you to get involved, be kind to a neighbor, and most of all - I wish each of you a life filled with health, happiness, good fortune and peace.

*To send your submissions, responses or request- email [NPBHeights@bellsouth.net](mailto:NPBHeights@bellsouth.net).*