

# The Kindness Campaign

STEPHEN D'AMICO

Last month we officially launched the Kindness Campaign here at *Good News Toronto*. Initially inspired by the desire to inject some kindness into the city following the end of the tragic Bryant-Sheppard case, we suggested placing flowers on someone's car or bike as a secret gift from the universe. But it is important to point out that the goal of our campaign goes beyond increasing empathy between cyclists and drivers, and includes our desire to inspire as many acts of kindness towards our fellow Torontonians as possible.

The concept is simple but powerful:

Each month we feature a suggested act of kindness. Readers are invited to perform the suggested random act of kindness (or one of their choosing) and leave behind the "Kindness Card" provided below.

The card explains the campaign and encourages the kindness recipient to "pay-it-forward" in the form of another act of kindness to a stranger. Dogooders then submit the story of their act for inclusion in *Good News Toronto* and a chance to win a Good News Toronto T-shirt.

#### This month's story:

Our first story is from Barbara Fishbein, a social worker at

Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, who writes about facilitating a random act of kindness that was initiated by another person, powerfully reminding us that remaining anonymous never goes completely unnoticed.

Our second story is submitted by Sharon Smith, a school-teacher in Toronto, whose story relates a humorous incident that arose when she decided to pay-it-forward with a gift card given by some of her students.

Please enjoy reading these stories. And as a reminder, write in and let us know about a random act of kindness you've either witnessed or participated in recently. If we end up printing your story, we'll send you a *Good News Toronto*

T-shirt as a commemorative token of our appreciation for your participation.

#### This month's suggestion:

As always, each month we suggest a random act of kindness to help get you started thinking about what you can do to bring a bit of kindness to an unsuspecting soul. Of course, our monthly suggestion is just that: a suggestion. We encourage you to let your spirit soar with possibilities, and then put those inspiring ideas into action through your spontaneous good deeds.

This month, we suggest sending a Thank you card or note of appreciation "from a local citizen" to the officers at

your local police station. Using the power of kindness, we can remind the officers on the police force that the citizens of Toronto appreciate the protection they give and the risks they take doing their jobs.



*The Kindness Campaign is coordinated by Stephen D'Amico, founder of Global Awakening In Action. Please visit [stephendamico.com](http://stephendamico.com) and [globalawakeninginaction.org](http://globalawakeninginaction.org) for more information about our other work.*

## Reader Submissions of Random Acts of Kindness

### From Barbara Fishbein

An anonymous person called me a while ago, as she had spotted a woman with three children, one with special needs, on a TTC bus. She had no name but thought the child may go to our centre (HOLLAND Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital). The centre serves thousands of clients, so as a social worker I certainly know many of them, but not all.

On the off chance that I could locate the family I asked the caller to give me a description of them. She told me that she saw a lady who was travelling with three boys. She continued to say that the mother appeared very tired but dedicated and hardworking and that one of the boys was in a wheelchair. She noticed the woman and valued how she cared for her sons as they travelled all together that day. She explained that the bus was travelling up Bayview at the time and that they got off at the stop that leads to our centre. She went on to say that she wanted to help the family in some way and that if they would accept it she wanted to give the mother a monetary gift. She wanted to remain anonymous and truly wanted to help if she could.

At first I thought about all the many families that I work with and how difficult it would be to find them. I listened further to the woman at the end of the line who sounded so genuine and sincere. I knew that if I did find them I would have to locate them and get their consent. I knew that there were many needy families and that this could potentially bring so much joy and hope to someone, as it was truly a random act of kindness.

After several hours and thinking about the time of day and the families I work with who take that TTC route with three children I realized that it could be indeed one of the families I work directly with. I also realized it was a family who was truly

in need, on welfare with a single parent raising not three but four sons on her own.

I called the mother and she was totally awestruck that a stranger would care enough to notice her and offer some assistance. I managed to connect them and she was given \$300.

A really special part of this story is that the client then took a portion of that money and donated it back to Holland Bloorview kids rehab for other families in need.

That day was very moving and reinforced my belief that Toronto was a truly good place to live. I call that lady an angel. I often think of that moment when I hesitate on deciding to give or not to give. When I tell the story I know others who are also inspired to put their thoughts into action. I applaud the donor for her act of courage in reaching out demonstrating a true act of human kindness and generosity that day.

### From Sharon Smith

I was recently given a gift card from Starbucks and decided to treat a couple of friends while we were enjoying a brisk walk together. After placing our order, I offered the gift card for payment. The young man serving us asked if I was a teacher, to which I replied "Yes." I had received the card as a gift from some of my students. Imagine my embarrassment when, after several tries, the card continued to show a zero balance! He then jokingly inquired, "Are you a bad teacher?" Upon hearing our laughter, the manager came over to see what was happening. After explaining the situation, she pressed a few buttons and, lo and behold, there was enough money to cover the cost of our drinks!

Thank you, Jessica, for your "random act of kindness."

### Come to Toronto's First-Ever "Kindness Pays" Day

Join us on August 21st for *Good News Toronto's* first official "Kindness Pays" Day, a social action movement organized by Global Awakening In Action.

Learn how you can become a kindness activist, and start spreading kindness in our city!

Become part of a growing group and movement dedicated to changing the world one random act of kindness at a time, starting right here in our city.

August 21, 2010

2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Nathan Philips Square



Visit us on [www.facebook.com/kindness.pays](http://www.facebook.com/kindness.pays) for more details

#### KINDNESS CARD

This Random Act of Kindness is sponsored by  
*Good News Toronto!*

Please help us **keep the kindness going...**

Give this Kindness Card to the next person you help. And, if you **pay it forward**, we would love to hear from you.

Just **write a brief description** of your act of kindness and email it to us at: [info@goodnewstoronto.ca](mailto:info@goodnewstoronto.ca).

If your story is printed in our paper, you will receive a **FREE Good News Toronto T-Shirt** as a reminder of your good deed!

Visit [goodnewstoronto.ca](http://goodnewstoronto.ca) for more info.