



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Senator Griffo's Weekly Column #6: For Those About To RAK, We Salute You

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO February 6, 2014

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Being kind is contagious.

Want proof? Look no farther than the Remsen Central School District.

This tight-knit district of about 400 students joined together recently to give native Erin Hamlin a sendoff worthy of a three-time Olympian.

Students waved homemade banners littered with encouraging messages and composed cheers, dance routines and even a rap in Hamlin's honor.

The entire event – captured beautifully in a two-minute video – was, in the words of NBC Sports, “adorable.”

The short film, shot and edited by Remsen native Shane Corrigan, hits the trifecta of kindness. It has a positive effect on the children and the teachers. It has a positive effect on the recipient – our luge champion. But perhaps the biggest effect of all is the one it has on all of us who watch it.

So here’s one way we can pay it forward.

This is Random Acts of Kindness Week, which celebrates going above and beyond the normal to make someone feel special. It could be as simple as thanking a teacher for being there for you (or your student), buying coffee for the person in line behind you or donating a couple of hours to a food pantry or animal shelter.

Not only is the right thing to do, it’s the healthy one too.

Scientists say acts of kindness can release hormones that lower blood pressure, make you feel calmer and less depressed and help you feel stronger and more energetic. Researchers also note that people 55 and older who volunteer for two or more organizations have a 44 percent lower likelihood of dying - and that’s after eliminating all other contributing factors. In fact, volunteering is considered to be more beneficial to your health than exercising four times a week or going to church.

Perhaps the best part of being kind is the multiplier effect. Scientists have shown in studies that when we see someone else help a stranger, it gives us a good feeling. And because of that good feeling, we then do something altruistic ourselves.

Now imagine what the world would be like if we could keep this chain unbroken forever. It’s time to give it a try.

Allow me to suggest a starting place – right here, with the children of Remsen Central Schools: <http://vimeo.com/84920956>