

## “Let’s Make Some Noise”

One of my children’s favorite books while growing up is called: “Hand Hand Fingers Thumb” by Al Perkins. It starts with a monkey showing off his one hand, with one finger, and one thumb, and with that one thumb he starts drumming on a drum with a soft dum ditty dum ditty dum dum dum. Can you imagine the noise??

On this anniversary weekend of one of the worst disasters in our world, we remember how we were privileged to witness millions of fingers and millions of hands working together for the good of the people. Volunteers, Red Cross, churches, youth groups, professionals. You name it, ALL came together to help our nation in need.

I’d like to believe that many more fingers and many more hands have stayed involved and have continued to make this world a better place.

Yes, when there is a national or global disaster like the earthquake in Haiti or the tsunami of Thailand or the oil spill off the coastline, it brings out the best in people. Volunteers who give tirelessly and expect nothing in return and are normally in the background are suddenly and unexpectedly thrust onto the media and in fact spur others on to act. Yet it is behind the scenes, after the camera crews call it a day and the disaster is under control that you can still find armies of people who have given themselves to help others and will continue without any spotlights or recognition.

Some of us are lucky to experience this phenomenon first hand.

Recently I got to help and watch friends, family and children involved in our Brockton Readiness Group stuff more than 300 stockings, enough for not only Adam’s Unit while he is in Afghanistan, but enough for every service man and service woman and any children involved with having a parent overseas in his whole Massachusetts contingent. It floored and put me in awe of the millions of fingers that went into making each stocking. People who not only knew me or Adam, but also people whom I know nothing about. People who just wanted to help out. People who expected no spotlight or recognition. (Over 700 stockings were collected in total, way exceeding my goal where I figured I would be lucky if I collected 10).

And each stocking was stuffed to the brim with supplies and gifts that were donated and given by people, scout groups, children, churches, families, friends and whom ever wanted to help send some love from here to there.

(As I told Adam once in an email when he asked me why MY dental hygienist sent him a care package...I was like...well you may be serving and she sent it to you because she is proud of you and is proud of what you are doing, but face it, your mom has connections!) A small project meant to keep me sane and busy at a stressful time grew and took on a life of its own.

I am proud to say that not only have filled stockings been sent to Adam and his Unit, but due to networking and having a friend who is part of the Pease Greeters in New Hampshire, stockings have been sent to the Ramstein Military Hospital in Germany, the Bagram Airbase, to Kendarhar, Afghanistan and to at least two other bases both in Afghanistan and Iraq along with another Unit serving in Kabul. I would like to think we have covered the world with a bit of love.

We shipped out approximately 7 huge boxes for the soldiers that day and, yes, I am proud, exhausted, but proud and humbled by my small part that helped make this a possibility. No spotlights, no recognition, just an idea and millions of fingers and hands to help make a dream a reality.

Sometimes we are called to a cause by chance, other times, like the stockings, the cause picks us and we go along for the ride.

There was a TV news program a while back that did a story of a house that applied to be on Extreme Makeover Home Edition. The house was in dire need of repair and updating and it was not functional anymore for the family that lived there. They were turned down.

When the town got word of this, they decided to see if they could get the whole town together to make this happen for the family. So armed with only volunteers they actually got enough people not only help to improve the house in question, but to make it bigger and better than before. Architects, contractors, builders, anybody willing to swing a hammer or put up sheetrock were welcome. Any job, large or small, was covered along with dozens who helped to feed these volunteers along the way. Children held bake sales to bring in money to help pay for much needed

items, and all this while they sent the family away for a vacation during the surprise renovation. In return, the town said they became a bigger and better place.

At the end of the show, a poem was read that one of the townspeople had written and carved into a table that would be part of the house forever. This poem is called "The Circle of Hands."

Life is but a circle, touched by many hands

Held in check by love, that's alive here where we stand.

Some lives are touched in special ways by unforeseen demands,

And yet relief is offered by the joining of our hands.

Little hands that work and little hands that play

Bigger hands that care and those many hands that pray.

Hands that touch a heart or stroke a child's hair

Hands that leave a mark on walls in a moment meant to share.

A community of love embraces these hands here on display

And this moment shared in time is intended to embrace you everyday.

So go out here into our community and carry forth the spirit of giving and volunteering to make this place and perhaps the world a better place and let your voice be heard...after all...If you tell two friends and they tell two friends...and they tell two friends...your endeavor may end like the book by Al Perkins.

Millions of fingers...Millions of thumbs...Millions of monkeys  
drumming on drums...  
Dum ditty dum ditty dum dum dum...

It's time to make a little noise. Amen.