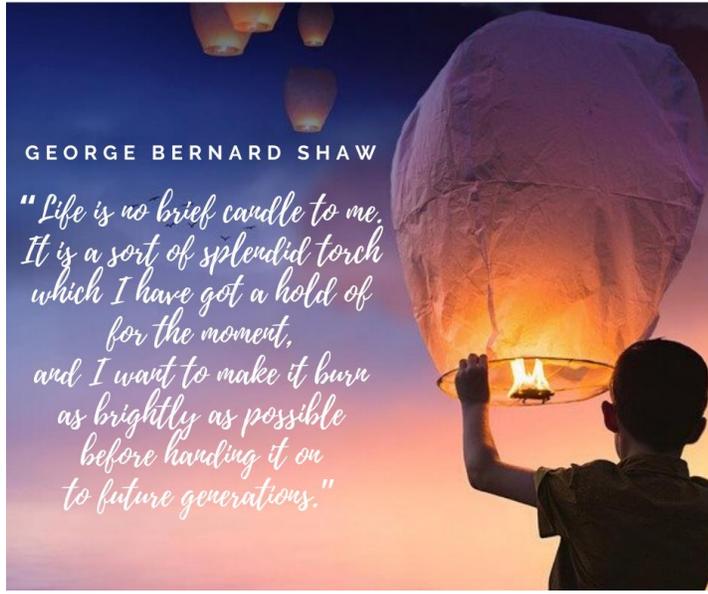


Cultivating a Generational Spirit of Giving



GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

"Life is no brief candle to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got a hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations."

One of my lifelong core values is building community through service. I have found that no act of giving goes unnoticed or is too small. By living with a spirit of giving, I likewise live with a spirit of gratitude.

I am fortunate to have great examples of service throughout my life. My grandma modeled love and service from the time I was small. Her love of people became infectious as she found ways to meet their

needs. I learned to follow in her footsteps and to look for opportunities to help others and began to notice the difference even one small gesture of kindness made in someone's day. This seed of compassion grew within me, and I soon began to look for ways to provide service, without being asked.

I also remember going with my mother to visit elderly women in our neighborhood. Sometimes we helped them around their houses and other times, we simply sat and listened to what they had to say. It wasn't important how much we did or how long we were there, what really mattered was that we were there with them. During our visits, I learned to genuinely love these ladies.

I continued in service through my teen years as I worked beside my dad and stepmom in their stores. The family businesses were located in the center of downtown and while running 3 stores, Ruby spearheaded downtown redevelopment projects. We worked tirelessly to create events and festivals that served our community while creating a welcoming place for people to come. Ruby gave from her heart and would arrive to the scene with her toolbox in hand, ready to tackle whatever needed to be done. Many times, she worked long into the night even though she had already put in a full day of running between our stores.

My grandma, mom, and stepmom each provided me with a strong foundation in service as they showed me how to create community connection. I often reflected on their examples as I started a family of my own and felt a deep sense of intrinsic responsibility to instill the value of giving within my

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kids. From the time my children were small, we lived by the motto, "Give with an open hand, Receive with an open heart". We purposefully dedicated a portion of our time each week engaged in community service, through organized projects and individual service to those in need.

At first, my motivation was to ensure that my kids had a solid footing and knew how to be charitable. We provided over 25,000 hours of individual service while my kids were growing up. Over time, our service evolved from being something we went out to do, to becoming a way of life. We loved and served people from all walks of life and as we served others, our family became closer. Our shared experiences for a greater good became the fabric of family life. We've had opportunities we never could have imagined and worked with some of our time's greatest visionaries because we were willing to first serve. My children have grown and started lives of their own and carry with them the legacy of community giving, that was started before they were born.

When I look back on all the opportunities for service I've had, I don't remember the sore muscles from the hours of work nearly as much as I remember the embraces and the smiles on the faces of those we served. I remember small, short-term projects blossoming to take over our garage and then becoming larger ongoing ventures that lasted the span of several years. I remember that no matter where we've lived, we always felt like we were home once we got out into the community with a toolbox in hand.

I've travelled throughout the United States and have found ways to give wherever I go. The spirit of giving is a vital part of who I am. Finishing my education and obtaining my degree in Writing for Film and Television will allow me to amplify the voices of others who are doing good in the world. I will use positive media to tell stories in a way that motivates people to service and expands my ability to share a greater vision of the value of service. My mission is to continue to build lasting bridges of trust that help create strong communities and to build upon the visionary values and purpose of the communities in which I live.