



SENIORGRAM: SENDING A MESSAGE ON SENIOR ISSUES

Generosity is our heritage and a key to our wellbeing

by Barbara Bodzin,
Executive Director, LifePath

“Three things in human life are important: the first is to be kind; the second is to be kind; and the third is to be kind.” — Henry James

Generosity comes in many forms, from charitable donations to formal volunteering to helping a stranger to caring for a spouse or a child. What these and other examples have in common is that they involve “giving good things to others freely and abundantly,” the definition of generosity according to the University of Notre Dame’s Science of Generosity Project.

Generosity has its roots not just in our individual development but also in our very biology and evolutionary history; hosts of studies have uncovered evidence that humans are biologically wired for generosity. Many studies point to the positive consequences of

“As the year winds down and the holiday season rolls in, create a kind moment for someone, anyone, even yourself, through a purposeful act of kindness.”

generosity for the giver. Giving social support — time, effort, or goods — is associated with better overall health in older adults, and volunteering is associated with delayed mortality.

Other studies have shown a link between generosity and happiness. And even small acts of kindness, like picking up something someone else has dropped, make people feel happy. Generosity is also associated

with benefits in the workplace, such as reducing the likelihood of job burnout, and in relationships, where it is associated with more contentment and longer-lasting romantic relationships.

Kindness can be as simple as a smile, a thank-you, or a word of encouragement. It’s a way of connecting, even if only for a brief moment, with those we pass in our daily lives. It doesn’t have to cost anything or take much time - what’s important is that it’s an act of genuine care and thoughtfulness for another person.

As the year winds down and the holiday season rolls in, create a kind moment for someone, anyone, even yourself, through a purposeful act of kindness.

A generous spirit is not about giving when it’s easy.... It’s about tapping into your humanity and viewing the world and others before you through your human lens – the one that sees us all as the same.

GREENFIELD SAVINGS BANK LENDS ITSELF TO LIFEPAH IN MANY FORMS

For more than 20 years, Greenfield Savings Bank has been a dedicated supporter of LifePath. LifePath is fortunate to have a local bank heading our annual Meals on Wheels Walkathon list of supporters.

“Greenfield Savings Bank is committed to improving the quality of life in the communities we serve,” said John Howland, president and CEO of Greenfield Savings Bank. “Our partnership with LifePath is at the very core of that mission. That’s why in addition to our financial support, so many of our employees volunteer their time to support LifePath.”

Denise Coyne, executive vice president and chief operating officer, has served on LifePath’s board for more than ten years, with many of those years serving as treasurer. She has also been a perennial volunteer for the Walkathon. “I know from personal experience, with my grandmother, how much it means for the elderly and people with disabilities to live independently. LifePath provides a range of services to help individuals, their families, and their caregivers to help make this possible.”

Linda Ackerman, assistant vice president and Turners Falls office sales manager has been dedicated to LifePath since 2015. She’s a devoted Walkathon walker, but also volunteers for LifePath’s Long-Term Care Ombudsman and Money Management programs. Linda shares, “I love my Bank for allowing me the opportunity to make a difference in the community. Volunteering helped fill the gap that existed after losing my parents. While missing my Mom and Dad



Denise Coyne, executive vice president and chief operating officer of Greenfield Savings Bank, and John Howland, president and CEO, are long-time supporters of the Meals on Wheels program at LifePath, along with many others from the bank.

will never go away, helping someone else’s Mom or Dad somewhat fills the void and makes me feel good!”

Over the years, many others inspired by Greenfield Savings Bank’s community spirit have lent LifePath their time, talent, and treasure. As a result, Greenfield Savings Bank’s impact at LifePath and on those we serve runs deep. It is our honor to accept all the ways Greenfield Savings Bank supports LifePath

programs, continuing to make options for independence a reality for our community.

Thank you, Greenfield Savings Bank, and those you inspire to support elders, people with disabilities, and their caregivers in our community.

To learn more about giving your support to LifePath’s mission, visit LifePathMA.org or contact Development Director Carol Foote at cfoote@lifepathma.org or 413-773-5555 x2225.

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF DEDICATION

LifePath thanks Laurie Deskavich for her service

by Lisa Weintraub Schifferle, Attorney, FTC, Division of Consumer & Business Education

When Laurie Deskavich thinks about LifePath, the first word that comes to mind is “commitment.” Reflecting on her 30-year career with the nonprofit agency, it’s easy to see where this insight comes from.

Before she graduated from Greenfield Community College in the spring of 1988, Laurie received the name and number of Al Norman, executive director of what was then Franklin County Home Care Corporation (FCHCC), from a mutual friend. “After speaking with Al, I was convinced FCHCC was the agency for me,” says Laurie. On May 16, the day after her college graduation, Laurie started working as a case manager.

Since then, Laurie has grown with the agency now known as LifePath. She went onto study Adult Psychology with a concentration in Gerontology at Syracuse University, and she holds a social work license and is a Certified Information and Referral Specialist for Aging/Disability. At LifePath, Laurie has served as an intake assessment specialist, certified SHINE counselor, and has assumed supervisory responsibilities for an array of programs. Today, Laurie oversees the Information and Caregiver Resource Center, which she calls “the hub of the agency.” Among other duties, she also supervises the Options Counseling and Caregiver Support programs. Recently, Laurie has been writing a monthly column, “Information & Caregiver Resource Corner,” here in The Good Life, tackling topics such as safe driving, self-care, diabetes, and, most popular, aging with a developmental disability.

The best part of her job, says Laurie, is “helping, supporting, and empowering consumers, caregivers, staff, and my peers.”

In her time with the agency, Laurie says she has learned many lessons, which could apply to all walks of life:



At LifePath’s 2018 annual meeting, Laurie Deskavich was recognized for three decades of service to the community.

- Listen and hear what is being said
- Defend what is right
- Give respect and you will be respected
- Be visible and present
- Be clear and consistent
- Learn from mistakes
- Never assume
- Know it’s okay to agree to disagree
- Be honest and humble
- Remember kindness always matters

“With her vast knowledge, historical insights and strong leadership, Laurie is highly respected statewide and is the LifePath ‘go-to’ person,” says Executive Director Barbara Bodzin. “She has embraced new initiatives and assumed oversight of short-term and grant-funded programs without hesitation. On behalf of LifePath, we thank Laurie for her passion to advance the mission of providing options for independence and creating effective program operations within

the organization.”

When asked why she has continued at LifePath for so long, Laurie says, “I admire the level of commitment and dedication that staff, in every department, bring every day to their work, consumers, and caregivers. I cherish those people and the memories we have made and look forward to making many more in the years to come.”

Laurie is also most proud of her two children, Taylor and Nathan. “I am who I am and do what I do because of them,” she says.

For those who will join in LifePath’s mission in the future, Laurie shares, “We have something for everyone, and we can make a difference in people’s lives.”

END OF YEAR OPPORTUNITIES FOR GENEROSITY

by Carol Foote, Development Director, LifePath



End-of-year gift giving is a common tradition, and for those thinking about making a meaningful impact on our local community through charitable giving, know that strategy and generosity can go hand-in-hand. When you support LifePath, you help another

person continue to live in the community, surrounded by the comfort of home.

Maybe you are already a donor but have been thinking about doing more. Consider becoming a recurring donor and start giving monthly or quarterly to LifePath.

One feel-good strategy and act of generosity is a tribute gift. This thoughtful gesture can take many forms. Maybe you know a LifePath volunteer or staff member who has made a difference to you or someone you care about. Giving a gift to LifePath in someone’s name is a great way to show that you are grateful for their service. Or perhaps a loved one

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has received care or service that has enhanced their life - you may offer a gift honoring their experience. Whichever path you choose, your tribute will nourish the one you are honoring. What better way than to support LifePath in enhancing the lives of others?

A win-win strategy we’ve learned is the ability for those age 70 ½ and older to give a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) directly to charities from their IRA resulting in possible tax advantages, depending on one’s situation. Visit www.irs.gov and www.fidelitycharitable.org for further information on this topic.

Perhaps you’re simply grateful to have LifePath available for when you or a loved one may need our programs or services. Supporting our organization now secures its future for when you may seek our offerings.

However you choose to couple your own strategy and generosity, we will be grateful for it. Thank you for thinking of LifePath as you make your charitable giving choices.




“You learn some great history and stories that you’d never have known without meeting these people. They’re all unique and special in their own way.”

—Alan Coutinho, Volunteer Meals on Wheels Driver

Find your story.
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