

**Water Hose
Hospitality**

11/1/2020

From The Principal's Pen



We all have lessons that shape us. Powerful lessons can sometimes come in uncommon forms. As I think back to my youth, many of those lessons were formed not only by the words of men and women I respect but also by their actions. A water hose shaped one of the most powerful lessons I learned. For that matter, it was shaped by about a dozen water hoses.

Thirty-one years ago this past month, my wife and I started dating. Before we were married, we would spend a week each summer camping in a primitive campground in the National Park near our home with her family. Although a camper allows you to have many of the conveniences of home, in a primitive campground, you must do without power, sewer, or water hookups. You must ration your supplies appropriately. It was midweek, and we had just finished breakfast when I was handed a water hose and asked to help. Over the next hour and a half, we would go from camper to camper collecting water hoses, put them together, and hook them up to the one faucet that supplied the entire campground. We would then go campsite by campsite asking if anyone needed water. We must have had more than a dozen hoses hooked together and spanning several hundred feet to make it around trees and cars and see that everyone had water. Holding tanks, gallon jugs, five-gallon bottles, it didn't matter what they had. We would fill them. It only took a little longer than it would have to fill one or two to supply everyone. We had already done the hard work of hooking everything up. By the time we were finished, the lesson was clear. When given the opportunity, take care of your neighbors.

As we are about to head into the long winter months, being neighborly may be what some of those around us need more than anything. A call to check-in. An offer to pick something up at the store. A few minutes of our time just to listen. A recent article in the New York Times focused on the impact of social distancing on the elderly. It has created a new "slow killer" in isolation and solitude. Isolation and solitude have also hit many of our school families as they deal with quarantines and the other ripple effects of this pandemic.

We walk past opportunities to help others every day. There is also a new hesitation to help because we may risk exposing ourselves and our families to the virus and its potentially devastating effects. While we have accepted that the virus will change the way we interact with others daily, let's not allow it to change our compassion for our neighbors. There are safe opportunities to offer assistance and offer an ear for those that may be feeling the most isolated. Our compassion for our neighbors does matter!

Right now, we are having a water hose moment. Those around us need water, and many of us have the hose in our hand. The question we must all face is, "What will I do with the opportunity I have." I encourage you to use your water hose moment well.