

# Personal Safety Nets® e-Newsletter



Thanks & Giving

November 2010, Issue 34

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## Letters . . .

### We Get Letters

#### Dear Safety Nets Team:

Our October e-Newsletter feature story focused upon the kindness and caring of the Patriot Guard Riders. We received a wonderful follow-up letter through Richard Trzcinki, a PGR rider, whose son, Connor, had written a school essay about "A person or experience that had an effect on your life."

#### Read what Connor learned.

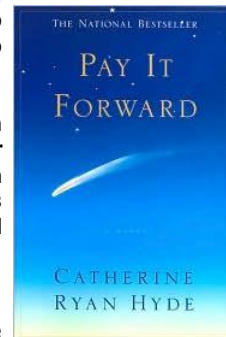


"About 3 years ago, my dad purchased his first motorcycle and since that purchase, he has joined a biker group called the Patriot Guard Riders (PGR). After a couple of months with the PGR, my dad asked me if I would like to attend a "mission" with him. **I said "sure" not**

## Thanks and Giving

Twelve-year-old Trevor McKinney is the son of Arlene, a single mom working two jobs, and Ricky, a deadbeat absentee dad. He does not seem well positioned to revolutionize the world. But when Trevor's social studies teacher, Reuben St. Clair, gives the class an extra-credit assignment, challenging his students to design a plan to change society, Trevor decides to start a goodwill chain.

In the novel *Pay It Forward* by Catherine Ryan Hyde, (and a movie by the same title), **Trevor does 3 good deeds for others in need. In return, all that Trevor wants is that they pass on the good deed to three other people and keep the cycle going.**



Even at an early age, Trevor realizes that one good deed might not seem like much, but if everyone does three good things for someone else, expecting only that they do the same for others, then **the ripples of generosity and kindness could spark us to become better people.**

This idea brought many readers and viewers to the realization that there is tremendous power and positive energy in giving. Still, it's a shame that not everyone has experienced it to the fullest. The idea of an International "Pay It Forward Day" (The next is set to be Thursday, April 28, 2011) is about all people, from all walks of life, giving to someone else and making a positive difference. At last count there were more than 28 countries around the world participating in the day.



"Some people were originally quite skeptical of the whole idea: they said that it was good in theory, but not in practice," says Catherine Ryan Hyde, author of the book and generator of the original idea. **"I challenged this point of view, believing that people are genuinely giving by nature, but many get caught up in the hustle and bustle of**

**everyday life.** April 28 is a time when each of us can experience the 'Power of Giving', creating a massive, positive ripple effect."

**realizing at the time what an affect this mission would have on my life.**

"The purpose of the PGR is to honor those soldiers who have been injured or killed in the line of duty. My first mission was to escort a soldier who had been killed from the Air Force base in Atlanta to the funeral home about 45 minutes away.

"When I heard about what we were going to do, I **thought that it would be a nice thing to do** to show my appreciation for what our soldiers do for our country. **I didn't expect the amount of people who felt the same way and what others did to show their appreciation.**"



**Editor: Connor was experiencing the power of a group coming together to support someone - in this case someone they have not even known. Effects can certainly be unanticipated. The PGR are holding one corner of the community safety net for the fallen soldier's family.**

**Read much more of what this articulate high school student wrote about how he, in turn, was supported by his involvement, and how he thinks it will affect his life.**

## **Free Tickets!**

**WE'RE ALWAYS TRADING FOR YOUR STORIES.**

Write us your Personal Safety Net story (what worked, what didn't, or what you tried), or ask us a question that we answer in our e-Newsletter, and **we'll trade you 2 FREE TICKETS to the comic masterpiece play, "A Tuna Christmas" playing at ArtsWest Theater in West Seattle.** The play runs December 1-24, 2010, so **get us**

Research from all over the world (articulated in Psychology Today and the book by Susan Skog, *"The Give-Back Solution: Create a Better World with Your Time, Talents and Travel (Whether You Have \$10 or \$10,000)"*) speaks to the benefits of doing volunteer work and good deeds - the basic ideas behind "Paying it Forward." We have proof:

- **Doing good for others can have a powerful, positive effect on the immune system and general health.** Boston College researchers found that pain, depression, and disability in chronic pain patients decreased after volunteering.

- Contributing towards the greater good **improves self-worth and self-esteem.**

- Being generous to others prevents people from becoming isolated, encourages them to meet new people and to step outside of their comfort zones.

- Chronic negativity can be dismantled in the mind as positive energy flows from giving to others - **the neural "glow" from helping others even shows up on MRI scans.**

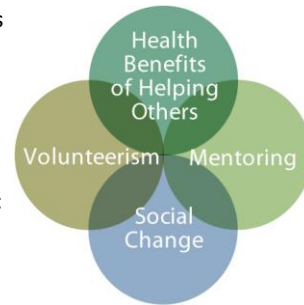
- **Kindness helps relieve stress**, which is a huge problem in many workplaces.

- "Helping contributes to the maintenance of good health, and it can diminish the effect of diseases and disorders, both serious and minor, psychological and physical." Allan Luks, after surveying 3,296 volunteers. (Right side image).

- **Volunteering eases depression** while helping us reach greater states of happiness and hope, as found by University of Texas and other researchers.

- Volunteering even **helps you live longer**, according to University of California-Los Angeles researchers.

- **Teenagers who get turned on by service learning and volunteer work are much happier and more optimistic. They also get better grades and use drugs less.**



**So why do we want to do good for others** - 1) besides repaying the many times people have done good and wonderful things for us; and 2) besides the research that shows life will be better and longer?

**How about because we want to do good for others as a way to build and appreciate our Personal Safety Nets! Why?**



- \* To show each other that we care and that there is love, hope and magic all around us.

- \* To know that we may be only one person in this world, but to one person, at one time, we are the world.

- \* To improve our own health and well-being.

- \* To encourage all of us to embrace

the incredible power of giving.

- \* To make a difference and find our own power through giving.

**Don't wait until April 28<sup>th</sup> to get on board the THANKS & GIVING EXPRESS!**

**Pay it Forward: How Much Is Too Much?**

**your story or question by  
December 15th to win.**

*(Tickets are available only for  
specific limited dates and  
available only while supply  
lasts.)*



Having gone through "something", what would you do differently? What advance planning would have helped you? Who or what do you wish you'd included? You survived. What did you learn? You can email us your question or story, or simply share it directly to our website.

## How Do I Tell Them I've No Idea?!

One surprising stress of family gatherings for those who are in the midst of a life change (school, family, mid-career, unemployed, about to retire...) is that of **coming up with an answer to "and what are you doing?"**



Before panic strikes or you get tongue-tied for an answer this holiday, check out a humorous approach in the cartoon, **Once Upon 'a Turkey**, penned by nephew, Ben Lazarus, when he was about 17.

**P.S. Happy Thanksgiving  
from all of us at Personal  
Safety Nets!**

**Join Us On**

Courtesy of **The Globe and Mail** this week comes the true story of Allen and Violet Large. This Canadian couple **won \$10.9 Million dollars in their national lottery, and chose to give most of it away.** They saved 2% "for a rainy day". When contacted, Allen said "we were quite happy with what we had and the way we were going...We weren't millionaires before, but we had enough to keep us going in our retirement...We're just plain, old country folks". **Well, country, maybe - but definitely not plain!** The next time you are



hard pressed to think of anything good happening in the world, cast your mind back to November 5, 2010 and the generosity of this couple who truly gave from the heart to the fire department, churches, cemeteries, the Red Cross in Lower Truro, and the hospital where Violet has been treated for cancer. **What a strong role model they are, supporting part of their community's safety net!!!**

## Your Holiday Plans?

As the holiday season arrives, we're reminded (again) of a slumping economy and those who are in need. **This is the perfect time of year to "give back" or "pay it forward"** - opportunities to help others and appreciate all you have. The holidays, while joyous for many, can remind us this is the perfect time to give - to donate and to volunteer. So here are some ideas. (We'll also post this on our blog and hope you add other opportunities, resources and contacts.)

Volunteer! There are plenty of charities and nonprofit organizations that offer holiday volunteer opportunities. Volunteers can serve meals or help sort all the toys and books that Toys for Tots receives. **Servenet.org is a great place to look for volunteer opportunities.** Since volunteering in one way or another is popular, check this out & commit early if you can. If not, last minute assistance may also be incredibly welcome. Remember, if you offer, and an organization says they cannot use your help, it is NOT About YOU! You tried, and this also has value!



Work in a Soup Kitchen! You can **help prepare meals** for the homeless people in your city. This is a helpful volunteer opportunity since the kitchens are very busy during the holidays and in most places, the weather is cold! Not all cooking, or all meals are on the holiday itself.

Volunteer to Cook or Bake! **Bake some cookies** or make a meal for a single person or a family and volunteer to bring it to their house. Many times, families get busy during the holidays or single people have no family to help them out. You can also bring treats to nonprofit agencies.



Visit those Less Fortunate! **Take some time and visit a nursing home, an orphanage, or a hospital.** Some of the individuals in these places do not have any family. Being able to volunteer your time to visit can help make their holiday season a little bit nicer. A good Web site to find out about opportunities is [www.holiday-project.org](http://www.holiday-project.org).



We've more than doubled the number of "friends" we have, and each week the number of visitors to our Facebook page continues to grow.

As promised, all through the month of November we're adding new stories from families and members of the Patriot Guard Riders - a follow up to our October e-Newsletter.

As we continue to move slowly but surely to add our ideas, articles, stories and experiences to our blog, we also offer you the opportunity to gain up-to-the minute news and to be our "friend" by joining us on Facebook.

## (NEW) Cool Free Downloads

We've posted two great Cool Free Downloads with additional and information on our web site on the benefits of giving back. First up is how Giving Helps - YOU! from Susan Skog.

We're also linking you to the wonderful, Pay It Forward, from *Psychology Today*. Not only filled with an interesting research and a variety of examples, but also simple ideas to "nudge" you along.



Want to read past editions of the PSN

**Invite "orphans" to join you in your family's gathering.** International students, and members of the military who are far from home are just two groups where people often welcome the invitation. Or **adopt-a-family.**

Donate things: new and gently used! **Holidays are a good time to clean house.** Some families have kids sort toys at this time. If you have clothes, toys, or food, there are places that will take those items and give them to families less fortunate. The Salvation Army is a great charity, as are Help Lines, or local food banks.

Give money! Appreciate what you have and share. **There are many charities and non-profit organizations that take monetary donations.** If you're going to be away for the holidays or busy, or you do not have the time to volunteer, cash is always a welcome gift during the holidays. Be sure to research the charity! Charity Navigator is one site for doing so, as is Motley Fool. In the northwest there's also the Seattle Times Fund for the Needy. Check in your community for local charities.

Hire someone? Find a job? Solve problems with the environment and jobs as well. Gather some ideas on 10 Ways to Solve the Jobs Problem from this YES! Magazine article.

**One last tip** comes from Jonathan Haidt, University of Virginia psychologist and author of *The Happiness Hypothesis*. It's easy to resolve to be a kinder person, but translating that into reality is another matter. **"To make sure your commitment to help doesn't weaken, partner up! Try joining a volunteer outfit where you form ties.** That's easier to sustain than being a 'kindness guerilla' working on your own." Besides, you'll strengthen your own network, and improve both your own outlook and your health all at once!

**Other ideas for helping? Visit us on our blog, facebook page, or send us an email.**

## Gifting

It's just the right time to think of the **perfect holiday gift** to give to your favorite boss, relative or friend, and what could be better than sending copies or a gift certificate for our books in print or on disc: **Personal Safety Nets®: Getting Ready for Life's Changes and Challenges**, or our very hands-on workbook, **Personal Safety Nets®: Get Ready/Get Started?!**

Instead of the usual tie, scarf or boots, why not give our **award-winning** book - a gift of learning, sharing and community building. **We can have your gift in the mail the same day you contact us.**

**For those who order from our office before December 15, 2010, hardcover book, normally priced at \$29.95, is just \$15.00. Our workbook is specially priced at \$15.00. Yes, you get them BOTH for just \$25.00! And remember, you can also get our book on audio CD, a \$29.95, specially priced for the holidays at \$20.00.** (Prices NOT available on line. Taxes, where applicable, shipping, and handling are additional).



e-Newsletter?



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LIBRARY**

You can also call us and arrange for us to send a certificate for that special person on your list. Our certificates, personalized from you, come in a colorful envelope, perfect for mailing or hand delivery, and can be used for any one of our items.

With celebrations around the corner, **now is the perfect time to place your order - giving us plenty of time for your gift to be delivered directly to you or your recipient.**

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