

Dear Team

Every month we invite all who would like to volunteer for a chit-chat in a group that we call our Volunteer Orientation. Usually the theme of the conversation is “It takes a village to raise a child,” and we ask participants for their views how we may bring about that “village.” This week as the group was reflecting on what “gifts” each participant could bring to the endeavour of building a “village,” a 19 year old responded by sharing the gifts she had received in her own life.

“The most valuable gifts I have received were all the difficulties that have come to me. Having a really hard life has been a blessing as I believe it has made me stronger.” This statement was a wonderful gift to the conversation. It got participants pondering if being helpful meant protecting people from their difficulties or even taking their difficulties away. If we had a magic wand that could grant us our wishes, would we simply wish away all our difficulties?

Anne who is around 40 years old, has been taking care of her neighbour’s child, Susan for the past month. Susan’s care-giver is still recuperating in hospital. When we complimented Anne on her effort, she told us that having grown up in a children’s home with her siblings, she realised the importance of family, mutual help and education. These 3 important things have guided her actions in life and over the years, she had been helping with the care of various children in her neighbourhood.

Anne smiled at Susan proudly as she related the progress Susan was making in school. She announced loudly that Susan had recently scored 10/10 for her spelling, When Susan was no longer within hearing distance, Anne reminded us that her cancer was in remission and hopefully, the test results next month will have no cause for concern.

It was a most inspiring afternoon with Anne as she shared her adventures helping others in the neighbourhood as well as the secret of her famous kueh tarts that she produces during festive periods for some extra income. The taste of the kueh still lingers in our mouths as we ponder if problems really make us stronger?

Have a good weekend.

Gerard

*There is no passion to be found playing small - in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living. - Nelson Mandela*