

# The Golden Thread / Le fil d'or



**april 2002 / avril 2002**



**T**oday, when I awoke, I suddenly realized that this is the best day of my life, ever!

There were times when I wondered if I would make it to today; but I did! And because I did, I'm going to celebrate!

Today, I'm going to celebrate what an unbelievable life I have had so far : The accomplishments, the many blessings and yes, even the hardships, because they have served to make me stronger.

I will go through this day with my head held high and a happy heart.

I will marvel at God's seemingly simple gifts : The morning dew, the sun, the clouds, the trees, the flowers, the birds. Today, none of these miraculous creations will escape my notice.

Today, I will share my excitement for life with other people. I'll make someone smile. I'll go out of my way to perform an unexpected act of kindness for someone I don't even know.

Today, I'll give a sincere compliment to someone who seems down. I'll tell a child how special he is, and I'll tell someone I love just how deeply I care for them and how much they mean to me.

Today is the day I quit worrying about what I don't have and start being grateful for all the wonderful things God has already given me.

I'll remember that to worry is just a waste of time because my faith in God and his Divine Plan ensures everything will be just fine.

Tonight, before I go to bed, I'll go outside and raise my eyes to the heavens. I will stand in awe of the beauty of the stars and the moon, and I will praise God for these magnificent treasures.

As the day ends and I lay my head down on my pillow, I will thank the Almighty for the best day of my life. And I will sleep the sleep of a contented child, excited with expectation because I know tomorrow is going to be *the best day of my life!* (Author Unknown)

Submitted by Sanja MacGillivray ('01)





## Life ~ by Ashley Condon ('00)



I thought that I was all done growing up until I left my hometown in Prince Edward Island to venture into the booming metropolis of Toronto to enrol in the University of Toronto's Theatre and Drama Studies program. No doubt, my physical self had already hit its prime stages of development but my mental and intellectual growth had yet to unfold. Not to mention the extreme spiritual and soulful discoveries set out for me.

I never understood this whole idea of mental growth until I started to understand myself, my relationship with the world around me and the perspective that is needed to embrace the full intentions of life.

I think the first 'eye opener' is the realization that there is much more to see and feel besides the experiences of a small-town life or a past life of sheltered encounters. As much as I loved growing up in rural Prince Edward Island, I don't feel that one can truly come to discover themselves until they remove themselves from all that is familiar. One truly needs to step out of the portion of their life already lived and analyze how they want the next portion to unfold. It is up to *us* to decide what we want to make out of this gift handed to us. The gift of life, growth and the future.

I made the decision to do what makes *me* happy. How do you know what makes you happy? My thoughts on that matter lead to a very wise man by the name of Maslow. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which we have all studied at one time or another, defines the human life as a succession of steps or needs. After one need is fulfilled, one can move onto the next. The first and most essential step is physiological : To have food, water and shelter. Moving up the ladder, one needs safety. Loving relationships defines the next step, and then self-esteem. Finally, after all is fulfilled, one can hit the 'self-actualization' stage of their lives. Self-actualization can also be referred to as 'the flow.' A flow is when you can enter into a world of 'just being' – you can become so engrossed in something that you forget about the immediate world around you and just sit in that moment not thinking about what you ate for breakfast or worrying about what needs to be done later.

A flow can mean different things to different people. I feel that the activity, job or event that triggers this flow is your passion. It is probably the only thing in your life that will never be tedious, the one thing that will never become redundant. I believe that passions will lead the way to personal growth on every level. When you follow what you love, the rest of the great things in life will trail behind.

Recently, I was very lucky to be asked to appear on the I-Channel for a special on Terry Fox's life. The show was called 'Eye on a Life' with Max Kennedy. I had the privilege of meeting Terry Fox's brother Darryl and another Terry Fox Humanitarian Award recipient and cancer patient, Adam Green. The three of us were part of the one-hour interview section at the end of the special. Being a contributing part of the show was an amazing experience!

I was able to share some of my story but more importantly my own feelings about Terry Fox's story. Max asked me how I felt that Terry Fox's story had influenced my life and I couldn't help but relay the tremendous courage underlying Terry's approach to live and his never-ending stamina that has stemmed from his phenomenal passion for things he had done. He wanted to play basketball in his younger years, and despite being ranked last on his team, Terry let his passion for basketball pull him to the top of his basketball team a few years later. I also said that Terry would have been recognized for his efforts even if he hadn't been diagnosed with cancer. It was in his blood to do the things that he did with such commitment and positivity. His cancer didn't bring him down but pushed him harder towards his goals. As Terry himself said, 'a man isn't less because he has lost a leg, but is indeed more.' His story is one of passion and passion can lead anyone into the success that **they** want. That doesn't mean that everyone has to be famous or recognized or exceptional at what they do. I think that extraordinary tasks can only truly be defined by the effects they have on the person doing them. Our own life choices are our own, and the rest of the world doesn't necessarily have to approve. We are all given the choice to make ourselves either the victim of our own story or the hero of our own story. If you do what you want then the world will hold you with comfort.

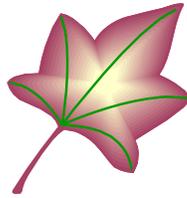
# "Voulez-vous parler français avec moi ce soir?"

By Pamela Finnie ('01)

*Voulez-vous parler français avec moi ce soir?* Is what I see on the backs of people's sweatshirts where I go to school. Living my first year in a francophone environment is an amazing experience! Not only do I have the experiences of first year university, living on my own and meeting new people, I also get to live in a French environment where everyone speaks French!

I go to the University of Alberta. You are probably thinking, 'Well, ok. U.of A...lots of people go to school there. Where does this whole 'living in a French environment thing come in?' The University of Edmonton is in Alberta – everyone speaks English there!

Actually, I go to a special faculty, the Faculté of St-Jean (aka 'The Fac.'). The Fac is located about 20 minutes away from the U.of A.'s main campus in the French part of the city. Here, all the courses are taught in



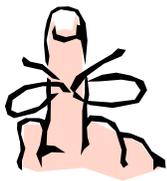
French and all the activities are in French, even the dances. Attached to this faculty is a residence for Faculté of St-Jean students only. To live here, we had to sign a contract saying we would speak French only.

Going to the Fac is almost like living in Québec or France. There is even a completely francophone mall just down the street! Living and going to school here gives so many more opportunities. Being fluent in a second language opens so many more doors in life, no matter what the language. Many employment opportunities require their employees to have a second language.

The Fac is a great opportunity to improve your French and to learn a bit more about the French culture. The class sizes are a lot smaller, the education is wonderful, the teachers are awesome and the students are all very friendly!

The next deadline for the Golden Thread is **May 1st** (post-marked).

Transcripts are due by **July 8th**.



Please don't forget to send us your summer address and telephone number

Check out our revised website: [www.terryfox.org](http://www.terryfox.org)

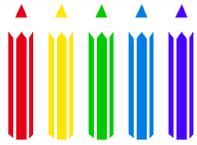


La prochaine date de tombée pour le Fil D'Or est le **1er mai** (cacheté par poste).

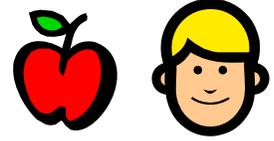
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Le relevé de notes est à rendre le **8 juillet**.

SVP n'oubliez-pas de nous envoyer votre adresse et numéro de téléphone durant l'été



# Lessons from Children



By Norman McLean ('01)

In my life I have had the tremendous opportunity of working with underprivileged children. I have done my best to help them, but inevitably they have taught me more than I could have ever taught them. Although crying doesn't always get me what I want, there are innumerable other admirable qualities that I appreciate, some of which I wish to elaborate on.

The first thing to note about children is that they are always honest. When little Johnny doesn't want his milk, he will let you know. A child will always give you exactly what he feels, straight up, with no deceptive flattery. The truth is a very underused thing, while guilt and deceit are somewhat overabundant. Children also manage to be very honest with themselves, leading them to be true to themselves. They are not affected by what other people think of them. They simply do what they want - for the benefit of themselves - without aiming to please others.

This decisive following of intuition leads children to be very curious. There is so much in the world that they want to explore. They have an infinite capacity for learning, and an unlimited potential for knowledge. It seems that often growing up means a diminishing of that desire, and the less you want to learn, the less potential you have for it. But there will always be things to learn and I think that like children, we have no need to limit ourselves. Children can dream. They can visualize what they want, no matter how impossible it may seem, and they believe that they can attain it. And in reality, they can. They haven't been distorted by conformity, nor had their individuality blurred. Their imaginations soar.

In a child's world, everything has the capacity for fun. Even an empty room can become a palace. They know how to enjoy the little things in life. A butterfly landing on a girl's face could keep a smile there for hours. Bad experiences and complications are quickly forgotten when an opportunity for play arises. Children can't hold grudges; they can't keep negativity inside themselves. The ultimate goal is to have fun! This goal is unadulterated by money, pride or anger. What better way to live than to have constant fun? Even though growing up requires responsibilities, it doesn't mean chances for fun have to be overshadowed. There should always be time to play.

As stated before, a child's world is one unadulterated by pride. When children cannot accomplish something, they will always ask for help. This quality is truly admirable. They will do their best, but if their abilities do not suffice, they are not above asking for assistance. Marvelously, this principle works in reverse too : Children are always willing to volunteer their services in the aid of others. It is one facet of an unconditional love they have for others. They show an impermeable attachment to those who will spend time with them and they are willing to spend time with others. It is a love that is uncompromising, free and truly excellent.

All of the above qualities come together in children, giving them a sweet spirit and an enormous capacity for joy. They are true, curious, fun, loving and, most importantly, *happy*. I am very glad that despite my frequent flaws and impatience, they have shared that with me!



# Poets'

## AFFIRMATION

By Elizabeth Lee ('01)

Thank you to Mr Nick Hardy from the last Golden Thread issue for inspiration to write my own affirmation:

I believe that we are all good.  
I believe sincerity is the key.  
I believe that the love we give is the love we keep.  
I believe that you can't give what you don't own.

I believe that a friend is rare.  
I believe that you are lucky if you have one friend.

I believe that there is no such thing as conditional love.

I believe in loving and dealing with the consequences.

I believe that it begins with you.  
I believe that it begins with me.  
I believe that there is no beginning to Truth.  
I believe that it began with Truth.

I believe that money is just money.  
I believe I am approachable.  
I believe I am worth discovering.  
I believe I have been cast aside.

I believe you don't let anyone feel abandoned.

I believe Truth cannot be altered.  
I believe that I am still me.  
I believe that I am rare.

I believe in humanity.  
I believe there's no other way.  
I believe someone loves me.  
I simply believe.



## LIGHT

By Nicole Gerroir ('99)

Light forms the basis to life.  
The light of God  
Light of guidance  
Light of warmth  
Light of darkness  
Even in the darkest moments.  
When smiles fade,  
Tears flow and dreams weaken  
There is still a glimmer  
Like a burning amber amidst dead coals  
Strength and warmth lie within  
Within your heart, love  
Love, the light that can burn eternally  
No restriction – give  
Be what you are – not anything more or less  
You will find a way  
Define yourself  
Be you  
Be free  
Dare to live  
Live to dream  
Give...  
Love...simply love

# Learning from the



By Lindsay Roy ('00)

Hello everyone!

I hope everyone's semesters went well and that this new year has brought many joys.

This year, I have been able to volunteer with many small children. This has provided me a wonderful opportunity to have experience with kids before I become a teacher myself. My goal is to one day teach both art and English. I haven't decided on what grade yet, but I always find young children very brilliant and also very funny. I found a cute little story from 'Chicken Soup for the Soul' entitled, 'Sunday School Lessons.' I found it very amusing in light of my own work with young children and I'm sure you will find it entertaining as well.

## Sunday School – by Susan Webber

The Sunday school lesson was about Noah's Ark, so the preschool teacher in our Kentucky church decided to get her small pupils involved by playing a game in which they identified animals.

'I'm going to describe something to you. Let's see if you can guess what it is. First : I'm furry with a bushy tail and I like to climb trees.'

The children looked at her blankly. 'I also eat nuts, especially acorns.' No response. 'This wasn't going well at all!'

'I'm usually brown or grey, but sometimes I can be black or red.'

Desperate, the teacher turned to a perky four-year-old who was usually good with coming up with answers. 'Michelle, what do you think?'

Michelle looked hesitantly at her classmates and said, 'Well, I know the answer has to be Jesus – but it sure sounds like a squirrel to me!'



Nick Hardy ('01)

**N**ext fall, when you see geese heading south for the winter flying along in a 'V' formation, think about what science has learned about why they fly that way : As each bird flaps its wings, it creates uplift for the bird immediately following it. By flying in a 'V' formation, the whole flock can fly at least 71% farther than if each bird flew on its own.

Perhaps people who share a common direction can get where they are going quicker and easier if they cooperate.

Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it feels the resistance of trying to go it alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of flying with the flock. If we have as much sense as geese, we will work with others who are going the same way we are. When the lead goose gets tired, he rotates back in the wings and another goose flies to the point. It pays to take turns doing hard jobs for our group. The geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

Finally (get this!), when a goose weakens or is wounded and falls out of formation, two geese fall out with him and follow him down to help and protect him. They stay with him until he is either able to fly or until he is dead, then they set out on their own or with another formation until they catch up with the group. If we had the sense of geese, we would stand by each other like that.



# Comic Relief



By Sarah Kearney ('00)

I'd like to extend a heartfelt and warm hello to all of you; I hope that all is well and that you are enjoying the final stretch of the school term. I know that sometimes school and life in general can get a little bit overwhelming and exasperating at times, so I would like to pass along an email that I received to add a little bit of comic relief to your day. I wish you all the best and I hope you enjoy these little anecdotes. Sometimes children say the cutest things!

'Give me a sentence about a public servant,' said a teacher. The small boy wrote : 'The fireman came down the ladder pregnant.' The teacher took the lad aside to correct him. 'Don't you know what pregnant means?' she asked. 'Sure,' said the young boy confidently, 'it means carrying a child.'



A grandmother was surprised by her seven-year-old grandson one morning. He had made her coffee. She drank what was the worst cup of coffee in her life, and when she got to the bottom, she discovered three little green army men in the cup. 'Honey, what are these army men doing in my cup?' she asked. Her grandson replied, 'Grandma, it says on TV that 'the best part of waking up is soldiers in your cup!''



An exasperated mother whose son was always getting into mischief finally asked him, 'How do you expect to get into heaven?' The boy thought it over and said, 'Well, I'll just run in and out and in and out and keep slamming the door until St. Peter says, 'For heaven' sake, Jimmy, come in or stay out!''



A nursery school teacher was delivering a station wagon full of kids home one day when a firetruck zoomed past. Sitting in the front seat of the firetruck was a Dalmation dog. The children started discussing the dog's duties: 'They use him to keep the crowds back,' said one youngster. 'No,' said another, 'he's just for good luck.' A third child brought the argument to a close : 'They use the dogs,' she said firmly, 'to find the fire hydrant.'



Little Johnny watched, fascinated, as his mother smoothed cold cream on her face. 'Why do you do that, Mommy?' he asked. 'To make myself beautiful,' said his mother, who then began removing the cream with a tissue. 'What's the matter?' he asked again, 'giving up?'

'Harsh words break no bones but they do break hearts.'



*'Little girls are cute and small only to adults. To one another, they are not cute, they are life-sized.'* (Margaret Atwood)



*Le Coeur  
par Daniel Boudreault ('01)*

Voici un petit poème que j'ai écrit en l'honneur du mois de février; celui du coeur et de l'amour.

L'hiver est arrivé depuis un bout de temps  
Et je pense qu'il y a un élément manquant  
Beaucoup de gens sont égoïstes  
Et c'est le temps que ça finisse.

C'est pour cela qu'en ce mois de février  
Il suffit d'un simple geste pour donner.

Le mois de février est celui du coeur  
Donc il ne faut pas avoir peur  
Il est important d'être généreux  
Pour rendre tout le monde heureux.

Plusieurs personnes souffrent depuis longtemps  
On peut les reconnaître partout où l'on va  
Il s'agit seulement de ne point être indifférent  
Et simplement d'ouvrir tout grand nos bras.

J'aimerais conclure avec ceci :  
Je ne suis pas là pour vous faire la morale  
Mais pensez donc à tous vos amis  
Faites-leur le bien et non le mal.



**Hang Onto One Another  
Submitted by Sanja MacGillivray ('00)**

Hang On To One Another

Too often, we feel alone. But there is always someone ready to take our hand.

There is a beautiful story of an overworked nurse who escorted a tired young man to her patient's bedside.

Leaning over and speaking loudly to the elderly patient, she said, 'Your son is here.'

With great effort, his unfocused eyes opened, then flickered shut again. The young man squeezed the aged hand in his and sat beside the bed.

Throughout the night he sat there, holding the old man's hand and whispering words of comfort.

By morning light, the patient had died. In moments, hospital staff swarmed into the room to turn off machines and remove needles.

The nurse stepped over to the young man's side and began to offer sympathy, but he interrupted her.

'Who was that man?' he asked.

The startled nurse replied, 'I thought he was your father!'

'No, he was not my father,' he answered. 'I never saw him before in my life.'

'Then why didn't you say something when I took you to him?'

'I realized he needed his son and his son wasn't here,' the man explained. 'And since he was too sick to recognize that I was not his son, I knew he needed me.'

Mother Theresa used to remind us that nobody should have to die alone. Likewise, nobody should have to grieve alone or cry alone either. Or laugh alone, or celebrate alone.

We are made to travel life's journey hand in hand. There is someone ready to grasp your hand today. And someone hoping you will take his or her hand.

*(Author Unknown)*



By Kristi Hansen ('99)

Over the last couple of years, Edmonton has seen a wide outbreak in cases of viral and bacterial meningitis affecting its youth aged 18-25. Up to this point, I hadn't really been too concerned with the outbreaks. I had been vaccinated in 1999 and did not know of anyone who had contracted the virus. I thought my life was safe from this sickness.

It's funny how quickly things can change.

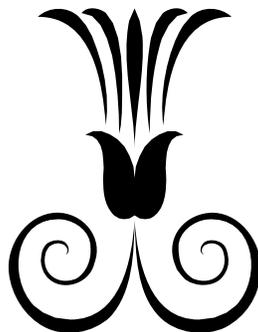
Two weeks ago, a young actress from Grant MacEwen College (my old alma mater) died as a result of bacterial meningitis. She had been performing as a *Lost Boy* in the musical version of *Peter Pan* when she was suddenly struck with a bout of nausea. She raced to the bathroom in the middle of the performance that evening, went home, and within 36 hours had passed away.

On top of this tragedy, one of her classmates and a pirate in *Peter Pan* had also contracted meningitis. This sick young man happens to be my younger brother's best friend from high school in Saskatoon, someone whom I think of as my pseudo younger brother. He's currently at the University of Alberta hospital healing from this strange sickness that makes him weak, gives him rashes and has caused his toes to turn black (which could possibly lead to their amputation).

Being an amputee myself, it is difficult to watch someone else go through the consideration of living with an amputation, but I have realized over the past two weeks in the midst of tragedy that no matter what sort of hardship one has to go through in life, it is *life* that is of the utmost importance. I don't think my young friend is that concerned with the possible loss of his toes or feet – I know he is grateful for the second chance at life that has been presented to him...and that was robbed of his classmate.

As corny and cliché as it may sound, we really need to cherish every moment of our lives and make the most of every moment. Life is a gift, and as human beings we have been given the honour of creating our own realities and finding abilities within disabilities. We're here for such a short time and we owe our lives to people like my young friends - and heroes like Terry Fox - whose lives were cut short but who still continue to shine as an example to those of us who can still enjoy the gift of life on earth.

Best of luck to all on your final exams and please enjoy yourselves this summer!



## Sandbox Years

By Joanna Rekas ('01)

As a child, I never thought that anything could get harder than tying my own shoe laces.  
Velcro even made that easier.  
A life of fun and games, no worries or concerns. The sandbox was full of new faces.



The sand that slipped through my hands is now the coffee that is poured into my mug.  
With a flurry of commotion I rush to catch the morning bus.  
I pray that as the bus pulls away my essay is among the multitude of books that every day I lug.

'Where's Molly, Mommy?' Nothing was ever more fun than playing house with my dolls.  
I would colour their faces with markers, comb their hair and dress them up.  
Innocent and sweet were the days of the sandbox, the days at the park and the colouring of walls.



The game of house is no more a game but reality, as I scurry to achieve the goals for which I strive.  
Chores to gratify the household; work to satisfy the needed income; studying to achieve the desired success.  
Time becomes scarce and only true friendships survive.

What lies before me now is a set of goals and dreams.  
Behind me lay the memories of simpler days.  
The future only time will wean.  
My purpose, God's secret stays.



## DAWNLINT

By Matthew Matheson ('01)

Sunlight streams through the fears  
Verdant trees cast rays of gold  
Raindrops glitter like newborn tears  
While dew laces each ripple and fold

Of the vale in the untouched soul  
In the forest of sinuous dreams  
Where above the thundercaps begin to roll  
As reality seeps through iridescent seams

Each tiny leaf a work of art  
Sways in the gale of ebb and flow  
Even as earthquakes rip stems apart  
And tides of tremors signal time to go

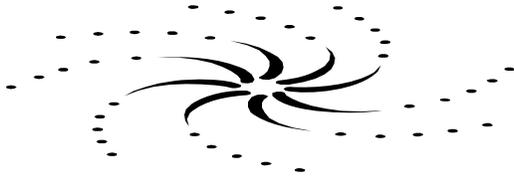
The emerald jade valley must be put away  
As the dreamer wakes to the dawn of day.

I wrote this poem so I could analyze it for an English paper on poetry. It describes (I hope) how the world seems to be falling apart when the subject is waking in the morning, but then realizes that it was only a dream. The poem ends hopefully, with the dreamer secure in the knowledge that the beautiful dream will return when s/he goes to sleep again. Breathe deep, seek peace, God bless. Matthew.

By Alayna Finley ('00)

This is for those suffering and constrained within the grave realities of the (social, religious and material) war-stricken places of the world. We in North America are exceedingly lucky to experience what it's like to truly be free. I have faith that after 9/11, much more will be done to make the world a better place.

### I DREAM



Lightning in the night,  
Boulders falling from the sky,  
Are images I see still,  
And don't know why.

I wish not to go anywhere,  
Or say anything.  
I've seen horrible deeds,  
So many horrible things.

Get close to them,  
And die you will.  
If not physically -  
You'll die still.

As I look up into the sky,  
Can I ever believe,  
That there's good.  
Can we conceive.

We kill our own kind.  
It's wrong, we know.  
Yet we do it still.  
And to all extents we go.

I dream of a world.  
A world full of good.  
A world where,  
Fly, I could.



## THE POWER OF YOUR ACTIONS

*Submitted by Yashina Jiwa ('00)*

For me, this story has brought a new meaning to helping others. Sometimes we dismiss the importance of going out of our way to help those in need, but it is essential that we all never forget that helping others is our duty, and as Terry Fox Humanitarian Award winners, we should all seek to find opportunities where our services can be rendered. We should never forget that every bit of service we do makes a difference in the lives of others. I hope this story enlightens you as it has me.

'The Power Of Your Actions.' (Author Unknown)

One day, when I was a freshman in high school, I saw a kid from my class walking home from school. His name was Kyle. It looked like he was carrying all of his books. I thought to myself, "Why would anyone bring home all his books on a Friday? He must really be a nerd." I had quite a weekend planned (parties and a football game with my friends the following afternoon), so I shrugged my shoulders and went on.

As I was walking, I saw a bunch of kids running toward him. They ran at him, knocking all his books out of his arms and tripping him so he landed in the dirt. His glasses went flying, and I saw them land in the grass about ten feet from him. He looked up and I saw this terrible sadness in his eyes.

My heart went out to him. So, I jogged over to him and as he crawled around looking for his glasses, I saw a tear in his eye.

I handed him his glasses and said, "Those guys are jerks. They really should get lives."

*(Continued on page 12)*

*(Continued from page 11)*

He looked at me and said, "Hey, thanks!" There was a big smile on his face – it was one of those smiles that showed real gratitude. I helped him pick up his books and asked him where he lived. It turned out he lived near me, so I asked him why I had never seen him before. He said he had gone to a private school before coming to this school.

I would have never hung out with a private school kid before. We talked all the way home and I carried his books. He turned out to be a pretty cool kid. I asked him if he wanted to play football on Saturday with me and my friends. He said yes. We hung all weekend and the more I got to know Kyle, the more I liked him. And my friends thought the same of him. Monday morning came, and there was Kyle with the huge stack of books again. I stopped him and said, "Damn, boy! You are really gonna build some serious muscles with this pile of books everyday!" He just laughed and handed me half the books. Over the next four years, Kyle and I became best friends.

When we were seniors, we began to think about college. Kyle decided on Georgetown, and I was going to Duke. I knew that we would always be friends, that the miles would never be a problem. He was going to be a doctor and I was going for business on a football scholarship. Kyle was valedictorian of our class.

I teased him all the time about being a nerd. He had to prepare a speech for graduation. I was so glad it wasn't me having to get up there and speak!

Graduation day arrived – I saw Kyle and he looked great. He was one of those guys who really found himself during high school. He filled out and actually looked good in glasses. He had more dates than me and all the girls loved him!

Boy, sometimes I was jealous. Today was one of those days. I could see that he was nervous about his speech, so I smacked him on the back and said, "Hey big guy, you'll be great!" He looked at me with one of those looks (the really grateful one) and smiled. "Thanks," he said. As he started his speech, he cleared his throat and began. "Graduation is a time to thank those who helped you make it through those tough years: Your parents, your teachers, your siblings, maybe a coach... but mostly, your friends. I am here to tell all of you that being a friend to someone is the best gift you can give them. I am going to tell you a story."

I stared at my friend in disbelief as he told the story of the first day we met. He had planned to kill himself over the weekend. He talked of how he had cleaned out his locker so his Mom wouldn't have to do it later and was carrying his stuff home. He looked hard at me and gave me a little smile. "Thankfully, I was saved. My friend saved me from doing the unspeakable."

I heard the gasp go through the crowd as this handsome, popular boy told us all about his weakest moment. I saw his Mom and Dad looking at me and smiling that same grateful smile. Not until that moment did I realize its depth.

Never underestimate the power of your actions. With one small gesture you can change a person's life, for better or for worse.



By Shayna Zamkanei ('01)

**I**n early January, near the end of Winter Break, I returned home early one Friday morning in a happy mood, having seen a movie with a friend. It was around one in the morning when I learned that a friend of mine had died.

I met her in grade nine through class and extra-curricular activities, and though we had drifted apart over the years, we were always on friendly terms. In grade 11, doctors discovered a tumour in her leg, which developed into cancer. After one-and-a-half years of intense chemotherapy and radiation treatment, it appeared the cancer had been destroyed.

Unfortunately, it returned within a few months and spread to her lungs. She died within a year. I still find it a challenge to admit to myself that she is dead, when the image of her walking up the aisle with the aid of a cane to receive her diploma is ingrained in my memory. I can't begin to imagine the pain her parents are experiencing.

Throughout the three years, my friend was faced with concerns no teenager should ever need to confront. She always wore an encouraging smile and was determined to live a 'normal' life – graduate from high school while maintaining a healthy social life. I have never met anybody so determined to live, to help others and to contribute to school life.

This article isn't meant to be an obituary; it is to remind you that the spirit of Terry Fox is not dead, that it lives on today – in teenagers and in children. It is a reminder not to forget the struggles of our peers and our parents who suffer from such a detrimental disease, yet who mark our lives with their humanitarian deeds. Remember them and let us continue their efforts in our footsteps.



## What My Disease Has Taught Me...

By Jacqueline Lukas ('00)

What my disease has taught me :

- No one ever understands what it is to be you, but that is ok because it makes you unique – so cherish it!
- People refer to disorders and diseases as handicaps, but they are wrong – they are strengths. They make you stronger, give you a better outlook on the world and make you a better person.
- Being sick brings your true friends closer to you, and the others do not matter.
- Never pity yourself or expect pity from others – it stunts your growth.
- Never give up hope for things you truly want, because just when you think it is impossible, it comes true.
- Never ask, 'Why me?' because it IS a part of you. God never allows more than you can handle.
- When the world seems unbearable, enjoy the little things in life : Popsicles, a good song, a comfortable bed and a favourite movie.
- Your disease is harder on your parents than it is on you, so let them know it is ok.
- Doctors do NOT know everything.
- Percentages mean nothing. When it comes down to it, you are less than 0.0000001% of the population.

Never fear the darkness. God will never leave you or forsake you, you just have to ask.

## **MOTIVATION 101**

By David Antle ('01)

September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 was a day that will live long in the minds of the people living on this planet. The events that unfolded from the terrorist attacks will be recorded in history books and studied in-depth by students. However, something else came from these tragic events : In a way, even if only for a short time, this tragedy brought humanity together for a common cause. People saw a problem and it motivated them to help.

Terry saw a problem in life and it bothered him. He wanted to help fund cancer research to help others with the terrible disease. Thus, he began his epic Marathon of Hope. People all over the world felt as Terry did as the attacks all but levelled downtown New York and Washington.

At Halifax's Dalhousie University many students – including myself and many other members of my Gerard Hall Residence – spent the evening after the attacks carrying beds to be shipped to stranded travellers in the airport who had nowhere else to go. Record numbers of people showed up at blood donor clinics, signed sympathy cards and flew American flags in respect. There are Americans who attend Dalhousie and much of my time following the attacks was spent comforting people who were deeply affected by the tragedy.

This massive show of humanitarian work throughout the world gave an insight into how good people can be if they put their minds to it. However, I question why people do not find a motivation outside of tragedy to do community service. Many people wait until an event directly affects their lives or their worlds to become involved in the community.

Everybody needs a motive. I have found a motive in not wanting to see people who are victims of diseases such as cancer and multiple sclerosis suffer everyday, if there is something I can do to help, I try to do it. I urge everyone who reads this article to find their motivation and/or help another person find theirs – do not wait until a tragedy to become involved. Tragedy occurs only every so often, and I urge you to become when it does occur, but there are people who suffer from disease, starvation and many other problems everyday. Find something you believe is a worthwhile cause and get involved.

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## **EXCELLENCE 101**

Hello, my name is Glen Robertson and I am a first year recipient of the Terry Fox Humanitarian Award. Today, I'd like to share with you what excellence means to me. No doubt, many of you TFHA winners have been associated with the word 'excellence,' but have you ever really considered what it means to you or what it means to the people around you?

This past weekend, I experienced excellence all over again, but it was defiantly unexpected. I was helping out at the local mall when I met a child who could do nothing but look up at me. The small boy listened carefully to what I had to say, and when I was done, he too had lots to tell me.

We spent very little time together but from the moment I met him it seemed as though he wanted to do nothing but help me. *Help me?* I was supposed to be the one doing the helping, but in spite of it all *he* wanted to help *me*. That was excellence for me. The way that small and innocent boy thought only of helping out, not asking why or why not but simply doing. No one asked him, he just wanted to help out and help others and he did it in the smallest of ways. He made me remember what it's all about, why we are the humanitarians we are. Displaying excellence will never be easy but we all have friends, idols and family to look to when we need to be great all over again. Don't get discouraged, just remember that you can make a difference, no matter if it's only showing someone else how to help.

What can you take from this? Keep your eyes open for the excellence in everyone; you never know, it may just inspire you. Secondly, but just as importantly, be careful what you do because you never know who is watching.



# Canadian Geography 101



By Darla Kalenchuk ('01)

Hi! My name is Darla and I am sick of telling people where I am from. I thought university would be full of intelligent and worldly people, but there are definitely exceptions.

Shortly after my arrival at Kingston, I met Andrew and Andrew asked where I was from. 'Guess!' I said.

'Toronto?' he speculated.

'Nice try, but not everybody is from Toronto,' I responded 'and I am not from Ontario.'

'So he asked, 'are you from out west?'

'Yes,' I replied.

'BC?'

'No, guess again.'

'Alberta?'

'No.'

'Manitoba?'

'No!' I replied, a little annoyed.

'Northwest Territories?' he continued as I shook my head, 'Yukon? Nunavut?'

'No!' I nearly yelled, feeling my frustration rise.

Exasperated, he sputtered, 'well, where are you from then?'

Now, perhaps the school system is to blame for such negligence in failing to teach this boy a little Canadian geography, but nothing can justify what he said next. I took a deep breath to calm myself and then, as if speaking to a three-year-old, I said loudly and clearly, 'SASK-AT-CHEW-AN.' What was his response?

'Oh, well nobody knows where that is anyway.' And that, folks, is a true story.

There are two runners-up to this aggravating occurrence. The first was having my province referred to as 'the gap.' The second was hearing someone say they knew for a fact that Saskatchewan is completely flat because they drove through it on the Trans Canada Highway. For those of you who have not driven this stretch of road, I will just say that this is comparable to someone who has taken the subway through Toronto and concluded that Toronto is dark.

However, I do not claim to be an expert on every Canadian province and territory, and despite the ridicule that I have been subjected to, I am proud to say that I am from **Saskatchewan** (swiftly flowing river).

