

LIVING WELL IN LOWRY

BY NEIGHBORS FOR NEIGHBORS

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A good neighbor is one of life's greatest blessings.

We've lived here for a long time. Having helped celebrate Lowry's Silver Anniversary earlier this month, it sure feels like we've been here about that long. When we moved in, we didn't have kids. We were newlyweds. In fact, at that time, there weren't many kids on our block at all. During the first few years around here, though, our family grew, as did the other families on our street. Eventually, this street would become home to 24 kids - mostly boys - *hmm, is there something in the water?!*

As each school year begins and settles in, I'm constantly reminded of what we were told years ago by those neighbors with older kids. We brought our newborn home to a *welcome home party* in the alley when I remember asking *The Seasoned Mom* on our block (through utter exhaustion), *will this get any easier?* Her answer was, without hesitation, *no*. She explained that the bigger the kid, the bigger the challenges! She added, with convincing reassurance, that *time flies* and to cherish each moment, the good, the bad *and* the ugly. And, so it began.

Fast-forward 12 years. That *flying time thing* she mentioned? She (and every other parent, including my own) was 100% right. Time is slipping away. Gone are the days of thinking a missed nap was the end of the world. One of my worst failed attempts at parenting (back then anyway) was letting my toddler eat Goldfish® for dinner. Reading the same bedtime story each night (for months) was sometimes the most mentally exhausting part of the day.

Today, on our street, one family has kids who've graduated college, a couple others

have kids headed that direction sooner than they'd care to admit, and the rest of us are somewhere between high-school and pre-school. It's all moving too quickly. From one season to the next, suddenly those little toddlers are no longer wobbly, and the ones in the awkward middle are all grown-up!

I've had many end-of-the-world moments since those missed naps, and even more failed parenting attempts since tracking Goldfish® consumption. I'm sure I'm not alone when I say I'd give anything to have a time machine.

As November approaches, we remind ourselves to practice gratitude. I know that we are forever grateful for our neighbors. Our kids have known each other longer than almost anyone else they've befriended in school. And as for us adults, we've created some unforgettable memories over the years, most of which could never fit in this space, that will stick with us forever.

So, for all the spontaneous celebrations (milestone birthdays, *new job* or *no job*, or even the annual *holiday decorating job* - you know who you are), thank you. For our Black Friday shopping sprees, long talks, walks, jogs and runs, thank you. For making sure our kids get in the door safely after school if we're not going to be home, thank you. For being our kids' emergency contact when they're home alone, thank you. For willingly signing on to be our kids' short-term guardians, thank you. And, of course, for the *ol' cup of sugar* (or any other ingredient, or small kitchen appliance) borrowed on a whim, thank you.

One day our streets will run quiet. Most of the kids (we hope) will leave the roost,

leaving us empty nesters. There'll be no more kids lapping the block on bikes pretending to be superheroes on the chase of their lives. No more pick-up games of four-square or P-I-G before being called in for dinner. No more hide-n-seek, Nerf wars, makeshift bike ramps or shoddy snow forts built furiously before the snow melts.

What happens when the pulse on these streets, sidewalks, and parks stops? When neighbors move away, downsize, right size, retire or otherwise? When the trees mature more fully and the houses fall into the shade of the afternoon sun, when our homes begin to look older and from another time? I believe it'll all start again, of course.

Some of us will stay. Our homes will become the place our kids return to for years to come with *their* families. Others will leave and land somewhere else. No matter what, Lowry will always be a place we're grateful to call *home*. It's *home* for singles. For newlyweds, with and without babies. For grandparents and retirees. Lowry is a safe place *to be* for everyone. It's *home* nestled in the city, where there's a constant buzz of livelihood, from the bike chases around the block to friends catching up over dinner in Hangar 2. It's where someone always knows your name, where there's always someone willing to help, and you can *always* find a *cup of sugar*.

Happy Gratitude Season to You.

See you on the porch!
Julie A. Landen

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