

# LIVING WELL IN LOWRY

BY NEIGHBORS FOR NEIGHBORS

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## *Looking for the Helpers*

Remember Mister Rogers, anyone? Yes, I'm gonna go there. Fred Rogers was, of course, the beloved, rather clean-cut, monotone TV personality who had the attention of kids growing up in the 70s-80s. In hindsight, he *was* a bit quirky, but think back for a moment. Before YouTube and video game-induced childhoods, back when TV *offered* something to kids besides foul language, bratty characters and inappropriate messaging, he was the guy who helped teach a generation about respect, acceptance and kindness. Of the countless lessons he *taught*, he spoke often of one lesson he *learned* from his Mom growing up.

*When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.' To this day, especially in times of disaster, I remember my mother's words, and I am always comforted by realizing that there are still so many helpers in the world.*

There are some optimists, today even, who would argue we have more *good* in the world than *evil*. At times this can seem impossible, but the sentiment is something we work to instill in our kids. Mister Rogers said this, which still holds true years later:

*We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say, 'It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.' Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes.*

A couple weeks ago, while walking through the Town Center, I heard someone fall. First, I heard her startled scream and then the rattle of her shopping cart. When I turned around, I saw a woman on the ground beside her car. She must have tripped over the curb. She landed on her backside, hopefully, I thought, injuring nothing more than her pride in the process. At any rate, she clearly couldn't get up and needed help so I ran back and offered her a hand.

Once she got back on her feet, she paused, held my hand tightly and said, "God Bless you, Ma'am. Thank you."

Now, I could go out of my way and tell you her race and if she was parked in a handicapped space. But I *can't* tell you who she voted for last year, or what her position is on immigration or the minimum wage. *Why?* Because I didn't ask. And, whatever her answers were wouldn't have mattered to me. What *mattered* was she needed a *helper* and someone was there to be just that.

Ever wish people would wear blinders more often and simply see beyond their differences with co-workers, colleagues, storeowners, family members, or perfect

strangers online? Isn't it time to move on? Not even just *on*, but *forward*? What if we all started living our lives as Mister Rogers' Helpers?

Our country has persevered through countless atrocities in our history. Each event feels worse than the last...from natural disasters to manmade nightmares. But, if you listen closely to the interviews and read the accounts of survivors, you'll see there are helpers everywhere. Kindness has no political party and it does not discriminate.

Just think, the person who held the door for you probably voted for someone else. The same may be true for the driver who waved you on at a four-way stop, or the person who saved your spot in line, or sheltered your lost dog, or helped you fumble through airport security with your luggage and kids.

The point is that all of the people we encounter in our day-to-day lives probably disagree with us on *some* level about *some* thing. You never know what exactly, but you probably still say *thank you* right?

*See you on the porch!*  
Julie A. Landen

