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VOLUME
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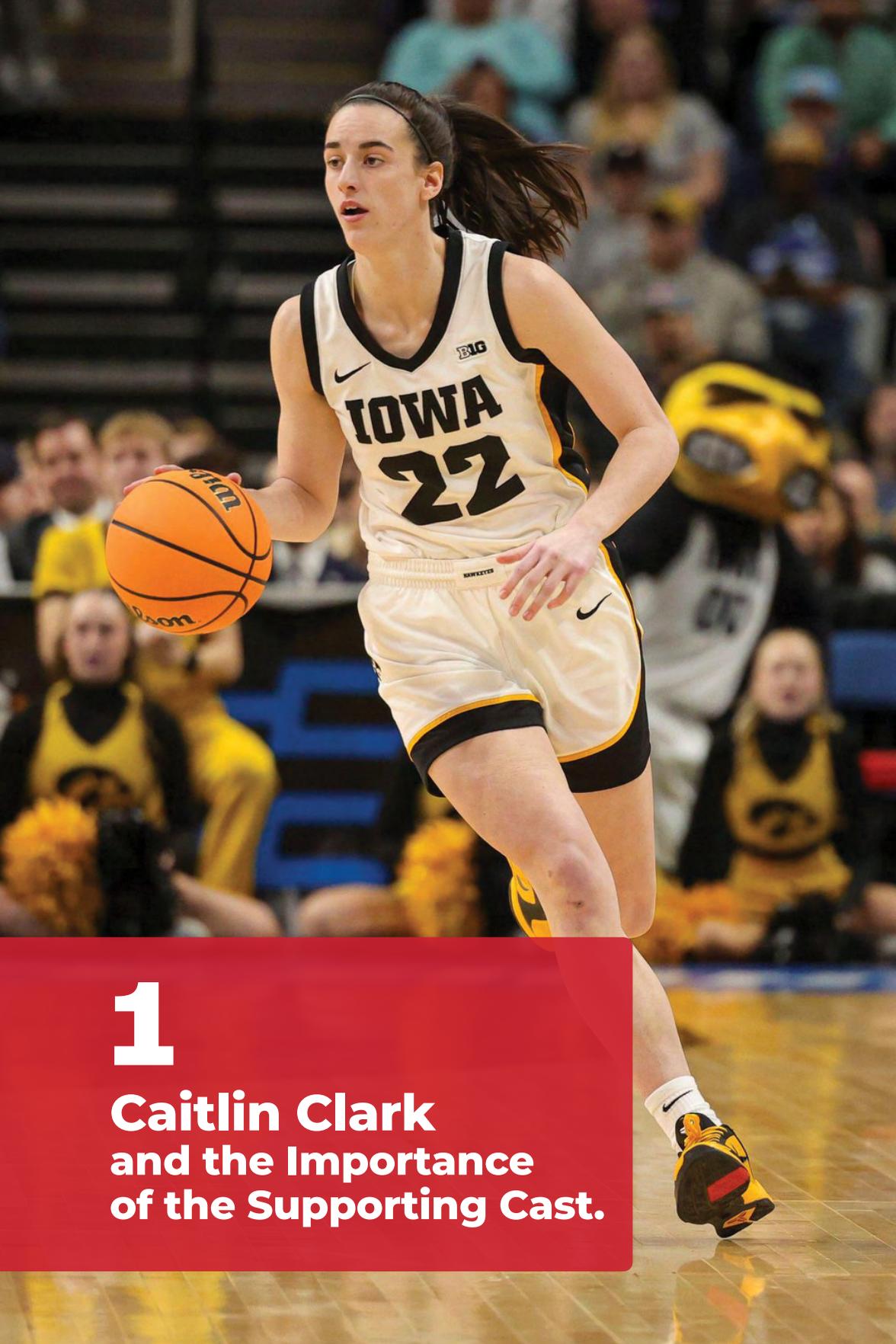
Stories give our lives purpose and create a legacy of who we are and what we've done. Each one in this collection is true. They tell of overcoming, meeting unexpected challenges, innovation, the joys of life, lessons learned, and hope restored. As often happens, a story well told reminds us of our own important stories. We trust you will find a part of yourself described among these pages.

We hope you enjoy reading these stories and if you come upon something that lights a spark of inspiration...PassItOn.®



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1

**Caitlin Clark
and the Importance
of the Supporting Cast.**

The All-Time NCAA Scoring Leader is More than a Great Shooter.

Caitlin Clark is the best college basketball shooter ever. She is also an inspiration to young girls everywhere who have hoop dreams. While Caitlin represents stardom, she also reveals the hard work and selfless play.

One of Caitlin's young fans is Linnie, a player on a ninth-grade basketball team in a small town far from Iowa. One evening, late in spring, Linnie walks into a gym that is more crowded than it has been all season. Her team has won all its games. But Linnie has seen her playing time go down as the team has moved up the charts to this final contest. Tighter games mean keeping the best players on the court. Still, Linnie knows she also has a role to play, to be the best player off the bench. For most of the game, Linnie cheers her teammates on, shouting encouragement. She gets her four minutes of play at the end of the third quarter, when she earns a steal and a basket. Ultimately, her team wins the championship and a lifetime of memories. Her basket was a three-pointer, and her teammates call her shot the Caitlin Clark. Linnie is ecstatic. Even though her team won by 20 points and didn't really need her basket, it feels good to be a part of it all.

Teams are built from bottom to top, not the other way around. There will always be those rare superstars, but games are won when there is a bond between all teammates and they work together as one. That's something Caitlin Clark knows, and she has high praise for her teammates.

"I'm just so thankful. I wouldn't be where I am if it wasn't for them," she says.

Watching Clark's highlight reel is like replaying childhood hoop fantasies. She makes shots so deep they seem only possible in your dreams. Getting less attention in Caitlin's game is her ability to pass and make those around her better: Caitlin is also the leader in assists this year. The supporting cast is better because of her, and she is breaking records because of them.

"At the end of the day, we have a really great team. And that's what makes it so fun," she says.

The players on the bench cheering on the starters are the same ones who push themselves hard in practice to give the starters a competitive look. They dish out compliments, work hard in the weight room, study film, make the whole machine better — and get little credit for it. Sure, they'd love to be Caitlin. But more important, they love her.

When we celebrate others' successes, we share in the elevation of all. After the championship game, Linnie is on the couch getting texts from her teammates. "Great steal!" "Nice shot!" "You killed it!" Each of us may have that moment when all our dreams align, and we are the superstar. Until then, we can be happy in our own progress, our relationships, our knowledge that whatever our note in the grand symphony of life, we can play it well.

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2

**The Birth
of Superman.**

How Two Awkward Teenage Boys Dreamed Up the World's Most Popular Superhero.

Young boys often dream of superpowers to solve their problems. "If I could just click my fingers, my homework would be done," many have imagined. Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster put their ideas down on paper.

It was 1933, and while the country was still in the throes of the Great Depression, Cleveland was thriving. Two kids growing up in a middle-class neighborhood, Jerry and Joe became friends on that awkward social island: high school. They escaped potentially embarrassing encounters by becoming obsessed with comics.

Joe was the artist and sketched all the time, using bits of any kind of paper he could find. He hung out at newsstands poring over magazines, especially "Amazing Stories," and then took up a pencil or pen to recreate them at home. Jerry was the storyteller and the more ambitious of the two.

He describes how the creation of Superman came to him in the middle of a sleepless summer night: "I hop out of bed and write this down, and then I go back and think some more for about two hours and get up again and write that down." The inspiration for Superman's origin story started taking shape, and the next morning, "I dashed over to Joe's place and showed it to him ... we just sat down, and I worked straight through."

As is often the case, when we experience something traumatic in life, we deal with

the feeling through creative expression. Jerry's father owned a haberdashery and had died during a robbery. A young child might process that experience by wishing something could have prevented it. For Jerry, out came the Man of Steel, who was impervious to bullets and had a penchant for protecting innocent people.

Creating storylines must have helped Jerry with the grieving process. Superman always wins. He stops trains and bad guys and cannot be killed. Like the best memories, nothing can take him away, and yet, being only a memory, he can never be completely there.

The story of Superman has inspired kids for generations. It has calmed their fears and driven their dreams. Most importantly, the Man of Steel has inspired us all to find our superpowers and use them to help others.

So, the next time you are inspired to swoop in and save a friend from being bullied or help the widow next door with your superpower smile, thank Joe and Jerry, two awkward high school kids who dreamt up Superman — making the world a little more safe and a little more fair.

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3

**Let the Kids
Give it a Try.**

How 17-Year-Old Dasia Taylor Developed Sutures that Detect Infection.

Dasia Taylor is your typical high school student, with one exception. She cares about the rest of the world — and she's doing something about it.

Dasia became very interested in science because of how it benefits people. When she started chemistry class last year, she sat in the front row, wanting to absorb as much as possible, not knowing yet how she might apply her altruism. When the teacher announced the upcoming science fair, Dasia was all in. She stayed after school and pored through science and medical magazines, looking for an idea.

Then she found an article on sutures that change color when an infection is present. The so-called smart stitches work, but the technology is too expensive for developing countries, where infections in surgical incisions are a major cause of new illnesses and even death.

There had to be a solution that would make it to the people who needed it most. "I said, hey, I can do it better," remembers Dasia.

Dasia looks at science from a different perspective. Not having a million-dollar laboratory makes you look for solutions in new places. Dasia describes her project as "a novel suture additive."

That novel additive is beet juice. For six months, Dasia stayed after school, cutting and boiling beets and soaking sutures in the mixture. Beet juice is organic, and it changes color when human tissue changes pH levels during an infection. That means patients and doctors can see when an infection is starting before it gets out of hand. And treating an infection early can be the key to beating it.

For Dasia Taylor, the best solutions are the ones that help the most people. Her focus now is getting the color-changing sutures to developing countries.

Often, we think of high schoolers as being too young to solve the world's problems. But there are a lot of kids out there like Dasia. It might be time to let them give it a try.

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4

**Going Deep to
Deliver Kindness.**



Free-Dive Record Holder Enzo Maiorca Rescues a Trapped Dolphin, then Watches as it Gives Birth.

Although Enzo held several free-diving records — his deepest dive without the aid of breathing apparatus was 101 meters — it was the lives of sea creatures that concerned him most. Enzo dedicated his life to educating the world about the link between healthy seas and healthy humans. He often quoted Vangelis: “Until a man learns to respect and speak to the animal world, he can never know his true role on Earth.”

While diving in the Mediterranean with his daughters Rossana and Patrizia, Enzo was in the water preparing to dive. He felt a nudge on his back and turned to see a male dolphin beckoning to him. The dolphin dove, and Enzo followed.

About 12 meters down, Enzo was led to the dolphin’s mate, who had become entangled in a fishing net and would soon drown. Enzo quickly surfaced and returned with his daughters and a couple of diving knives. They freed the dolphin and helped her to the surface. He recalls: “As soon as she was on the surface, after breathing out foam and blood, she gave birth to a dolphin calf under the watchful eyes of her mate.”

Enzo and his daughters marveled at the miracle they had just witnessed. While they were still in the water, the male dolphin circled around and touched its beak to Enzo’s cheek, like a kiss of gratitude.

The world is full of opportunities that lead to miracles if we only follow those nudges. Next door is a neighbor who needs a smile and a conversation, a child who needs a little reassurance, or a young mom who just witnessed her own miracle and would love to share it with you. Or perhaps even one of our wild siblings, ready to share its world.

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5

Curing Cancer, One Bar of Soap at a Time.

**14-Year-Old Heman Bekele Awarded
the 3m Young Scientist Award for
Developing a Soap that Activates
Skin Cells to Fight Cancer.**



Heman Bekele was born in Ethiopia. He's always had a scientist's curiosity, that insatiable desire to know how the physical world works and how to improve the lives of its inhabitants. Before he moved to the United States at age 4, he remembers watching people working in the hot sun all day. In middle school, he began to wonder if they knew the risk of skin cancer associated with sun exposure.

Skin cancer is one of the most common forms of cancer. Untreated, it can spread beneath the skin's surface to the lymph nodes and blood. The key to preventing complications and even death due to skin cancer is early treatment.

Sometimes, the simplest answers solve the most complex problems. That's where Heman's curious mind comes in. Heman developed Melanoma Treating Soap (MTS), a daily soap that uses a compound to treat skin cancer by reviving dendritic cells — an important part of the immune system — attacked by cancer. Once revived, the healthy cells fight against the cancer cells. Deborah Isabelle, a product engineering specialist from 3M and Heman's mentor, describes the product this way: "The soap reminds the body how to defend itself."

The simple solutions are often the most effective because they are the ones people will use. Soap is a daily ritual for most people, and for those at risk in sun-drenched areas, using soap is an easy and affordable solution. "I wanted to make my idea something that not only was great in terms of science but also could be accessible to as many people as possible," Heman says. "No matter where you live, I think you know and trust soap in comparison to other medicinal products."

Making soap with the right compounds to hold it together and still be effective took months of work creating prototypes. To speed up the process, Heman used computer modeling to test and refine combinations of compounds.

In the journey of pursuing a passion, multiple disciplines are needed: a little knowledge of chemistry, marketing, software and computer skills, and even social science to see how people will respond to a new product. But when we educate ourselves with a purpose, we learn much faster. And Heman started with a goal in mind and learned the skills along the way.

"There's still a lot to do," Heman says. He has plans to start a nonprofit to distribute the soap to places in the world that need it most. That means learning about distribution and supply chains as well as international relations. That's a tall order for a 14-year-old. But to Heman, that's the advantage of starting young. He has dreams of building something life changing. His vision is to turn the cancer-fighting soap into a "symbol of hope, accessibility, and a world where skin cancer treatment is within reach for all."

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6

**Getting Outside is the
Best Way to Get Rid
of the Blues.**

Brad's idea of a good time is to swim across the lake at the base of the Grand Tetons, then hike to the top peak and back again on the same day. Sometimes his wife Sheila will join him for the hike portion. He's also summited with his two daughters, ages 19 and 15. They climb frozen waterfalls in the winter and ski the backcountry.

In the summer they do 100-mile bike races together and afterward hold family pull-up contests on an abandoned trellis 30 feet above a sandy river. "Being in the wilderness is the best therapy I've found," Sheila says. "It's a stress reliever. It reduces anxiety." Brad agrees. "If I'm in the middle of a stressful week at work I'll get up at 4 in the morning and hike the nearest peak and watch the sunrise before going to the office."

An article published in the Berkley News details the power of Nature therapy not only in reducing stress and anxiety, but also in dramatically reducing the symptoms of PTSD. This is the premise the National Abilities center is built on. The NAC draws in participants from all over the Country, veterans with PTSD, kids with autism, stroke survivors. It's a mixed bag of humanity who landed on the unfairness side of life. And it's a group that Brad and his family would join in the mountains.

Brad's family was soon part of a larger family, skiing with autistic kids, mountain biking with veterans. The girls quickly connected with the kids they skied with. Sage, the oldest daughter remembers: "It's a lot easier to bond with these kids. You instantly become friends because they are not encumbered by the same social cues. Their boundaries are different. They love easily."

The therapy was working both ways. Sienna recalls riding with a man in his mid-forties. He'd suf-

fered a stroke two years earlier and his right side was paralyzed. Sienna rode beside his recumbent bike and listened to the man's daughter sing gospel songs to encourage him along. "Days like that just bring out the best in us," Sienna says. Amen. The forest and the clear sky beyond create a sense of connection beyond our small humanness. Just walking the trails or ambling along on a bicycle we become a part of something bigger. It's that awe we feel that heals our emotions.

Brad's wife Sheila was asked to teach a yoga class for veterans in that peaceful mountain setting. She didn't give it much thought but two days before the class, her mother passed away. "I showed up vulnerable and hoping the class would be a distraction," Sheila says. "And then I see people coming in, many missing limbs and I was totally unprepared. How do you teach yoga to someone who doesn't have legs?" The class settled in and Sheila grew emotional. "I've just lost my mother," she said. "We are all hurting in some way. But if we help each other out we'll get through it." She won't forget that first class. When it was over, the whole class embraced. "It was a spiritual experience," Sheila says, still tagged with the emotions of that day.

"Being in the wilderness has sustained our family through hard times," Brad says. "And now we get to see how it heals our new friends," Sheila adds.

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7

**Mary Anderson
The Woman who Invented
the Windshield Wiper.**

Sometimes it just takes looking at things a little differently in order to solve a problem. Sometimes we don't even realize there is a problem until we ask questions that begin with why?

We tend to think of inventors as those bespectacled, thick-apron-wearing individuals bending over workbenches all day, tinkering. But inside each of us is a natural curiosity that we can tap into if we just take the time to think. Sometimes we need a change of scenery to arouse our senses. And so it was with Mary Anderson.

Mary was born on an Alabama plantation during Reconstruction, just after the Civil War. Those years of rebuilding a country required strong individuals, and Mary was one of them. She moved to Birmingham, Alabama, and became a real estate developer, then on to Fresno, California, to operate a cattle ranch and vineyard.

In 1903, Mary visited New York City, the bustling metropolis that was fast becoming the center of enterprise. It was winter, and Mary jumped aboard a trolley car. She became slightly annoyed at how often the driver had to stop and clear the windshield on that frosty day. Of course, nobody else had thought to solve the problem. It was just one of those things drivers accepted.

When Mary returned home, she went right to work on a spring-loaded lever with a rubber blade that the driver could operate from inside the trolley car. She patented the device before Henry Ford rolled out his first automobile.

Unfortunately for Mary, she never made any money from her invention. It was deemed too dangerous to operate a hand lever to clean the windshield while driving. But by 1922, after Mary's patent expired, Cadillac included wipers on all their cars. Driving was more popular, cars got faster and Mary's invention was exactly what they needed.

It wasn't until 2011 that Mary Anderson was inducted into the International Inventors Hall of Fame, finally getting the recognition she so rightfully deserved. Meanwhile, although Mary wasn't financially successful with her invention, she was successful as a real estate developer, rancher and viticulturalist. And she did make the history books for an invention that was years ahead of its time — simply because she wanted to see a little more clearly.

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8

**The Simplest Word in
our Language can be
the Most Inclusive.**

Junior high school can be a punishing place. It's where extroverts thrive, introverts are pushed aside and class distinctions are sharply defined as adolescents try to find a place to belong.

Jennifer moved from Cincinnati to a small town in New England in the seventh grade. Not an easy transition, since nearly every kid at the school had grown up in the town and social groups were well established. Jennifer walked the hallways alone for the first few days. Ate lunch alone. Walked home alone. On each corner of the town square sat an old stone church, four different denominations. It felt to Jennifer that every family had their place, and "no vacancy" signs were posted on every clique at school. Then one day, Cathy, the girl next to her in class, said "Hi."

A simple greeting can become a life preserver. The two talked, and it turned out they had much in common. More friends were introduced, including a boy nicknamed Gizzy, who lived next door to Jennifer. Their bedroom windows were only 12 feet apart. That made for the kind of meandering, late-night conversations where budding teenagers try to uncover meaning in the vortex of new emotions with a little darkness and distance between them to temper their vulnerabilities.

Cathy, Jennifer and Gizzy remained good friends through high school, those years on which it seems so much of our life depends. There were all the friend things: Football games and swimming holes and school dances, events that shape your social life if you are included.

But high school doesn't last long, and soon Jennifer went west for college. She called Cathy, sent pictures, met a boy and got

engaged. A friend 2,500 miles away is still somebody to share secrets with, and those growing-up years create bonds on the most fragile introductions. That word "hi" can do so much for a person over the years.

Five years out of high school, Jennifer called Cathy. "Hi" was all she could say before bursting into tears. Jennifer had just gotten the news: Gizzy had died in a car accident. That "hi" was all that needed to be said, because behind it were all the emotions of "I need you. I want to be near you, somehow. Stay on the phone even when I'm not talking."

"Hi" can mean so much at the right time. Even the entire span of the country doesn't diminish true friendship. Like those conversations at night with a little space and moonlight between friends, love can find its honesty and its forever.

Who will you say "hi" to today?

Hi...
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9

To Stay or Run?

**The Courageous Story of a Collegiate
Wrestler who Fought a Grizzly Bear
to Save a Friend.** *With thanks to
The Cowboy State Daily.*



There's a saying in the West that when things get tough, you have to cowboy up. In Wyoming, the history of cowboys braving the elements to sustain ranches during subzero weather, and fixing things on their own in the harsh landscape, is ingrained in the people. They are as independent as they are loyal; hardened physically by their labors, they still harbor hearts as big as the Wyoming sky.

In Powell, Wyoming, you'll find a tight group of college wrestlers. After practice one autumn morning, four of them went out into the wilderness to collect the antlers shed by deer and elk. The group split into pairs to conduct their treasure hunt.

Five miles into the wilderness, Brady Lowry was attacked by a grizzly bear. The huge bear knocked him off a small ledge, breaking his arm in the attack. It happened so fast he didn't have time to reach for his bear spray.

Teammate Kendell Cummings, who was a short distance away, charged the bear, trying to distract him.

"I grabbed and yanked him hard by the ear," Cummings said. The bear turned from Lowry, reared up and attacked Cummings, swiftly knocking him to the ground. "I could hear when his teeth would hit my skull, I could feel when he'd bite down on my bones."

The bear eventually left, and Cummings stood up, blood pouring from open wounds on his face and arms. He called to his teammate. "I think the bear heard me. It kind of circled around and got me again." Cummings lay stunned and bleeding until the bear left again.

After several minutes, he got up and found Lowry, and the two bloodied young men began the arduous journey down the mountain. In the immediate aftermath of the attack, adrenaline dissipated their pain. But hiking down the steep and rocky slope soon became agonizing. Lowry used his cell phone to call their other two teammates, who met them on the trail. Cummings and Lowry were fading from loss of blood, so Orrin Jackson and August Harrison carried their teammates on their backs down the mountain to meet the Search and Rescue team that Jackson had arranged along the way.

After a cold, bumpy ATV ride, they were rushed to the hospital, and both underwent multiple surgeries. It wasn't long before the rest of their Northwest Trapper teammates joined them in Billings, Montana, staying for two days and two nights until Cummings and Lowry were in the clear.

Lowry was emotional about the experience, and grateful that his friend and teammate had saved his life. "That's what the wrestling team does — we go to hell and back with each other. We aren't going to let one of us go down without helping."

As the late autumn sun gives way to the crystallized afternoon air a week later in Wyoming, two intrepid wrestlers know it will take months to recover from their life-threatening injuries. But they also plan on returning to the team as soon as possible, maybe as soon as this season.

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10

**Everybody Can
be a Hero.**



How Window Cleaners Brightened the Day at a Children's Hospital.

Children need heroes. They help kids cope with the world around them, providing a little bit of hope and a lot of entertainment. The classic heroes are always on the side of justice and compassion. They make things right no matter the odds. And in our world of uncertainty, our kids definitely need a bit of help keeping their balance and looking forward to a better future.

Even more, for some kids, the odds just seem to be stacked against them. They lie in hospital beds through long illnesses, away from playgrounds and classrooms where their friends can embrace them. Some kids will return to hospitals again and again as they go through treatments for cancer or kidney diseases that make them regulars. It's a tough road, and the pandemic made it even rougher by limiting the number of visitors a child patient could see.

So imagine being a 6-year-old child in a hospital bed when Spiderman knocks on your window!

Having Spiderman close gives you the courage to face the coming days, and it certainly brightens the moment he pays you a visit. That's why recently, for four hours, Spiderman and Captain American dangled from the roof of Le Bonheur Children's Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee.

The kids were thrilled. The staff cheered. And the parents cried. It was one of those magical moments when everything that's right with the world converges into an explosion of emotions.

Kids and parents find a little more hope, a little more courage. And healthcare workers find themselves smiling, a relief that has been a long time coming.

Farther south, another team of window washers also made their appearance as superheroes at a hospital in St. Petersburg, Florida, and the children were ecstatic. The distraction from their pain is beneficial to their mental health and even helps them heal faster. But most importantly, it makes them happy.

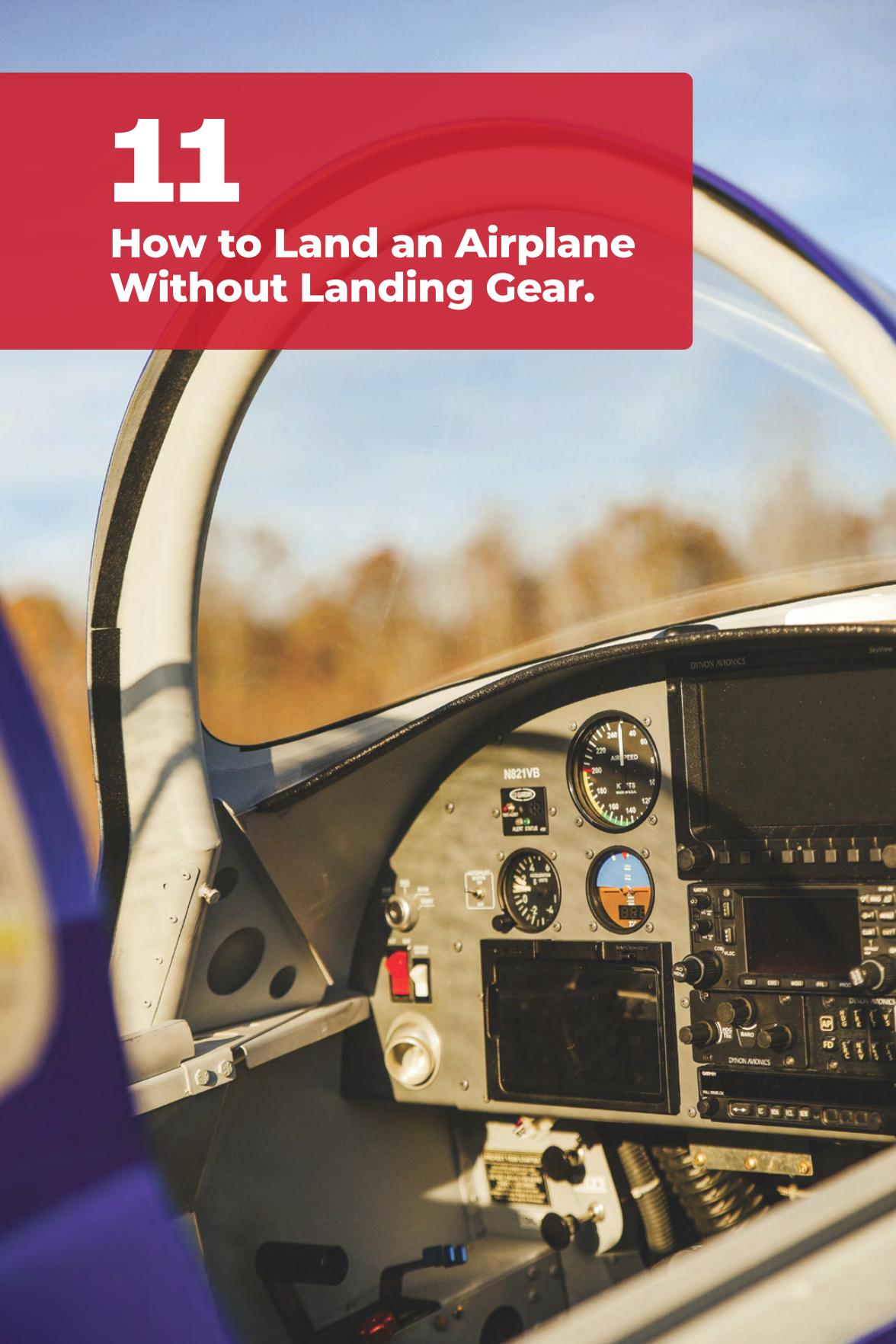
We can all be somebody's superhero for a day, an hour or just a moment. Distracting someone from the pain they are feeling with a little something to cheer them up just might make their day. And you don't have to dangle from a rooftop to do it.

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11

How to Land an Airplane Without Landing Gear.



17-Year-Old Maggie Taraska Landed her Airplane Without Landing Gear on her Way to Flying Solo Cross-Country.

At 17 years old, most people are still struggling to parallel park. Yes, it takes a bit of practice. And once the car is parked, the day is packed with school activities and homework and just hanging out with friends. But at 17, Maggie Taraska had an outrageous goal in mind: Fly solo across the United States.

Both of Maggie's parents are Air Force veterans, so the urge to be airborne is in Maggie's genes. So she went to flight school, put in the hours with an instructor and started on her solo hours. But on her first solo takeoff, out of a small airport in Massachusetts, something didn't sound right. The plane had lost one of the landing gear wheels. "As soon as I took off, I heard something," Maggie said. "I just felt something was wrong instinctively."

The Piper Cub had plenty of gas, so her instructor had time to talk her through the maneuvers from the ground while she circled a few times to gather herself.

"I was just petrified. I was thinking about all of the bad things that could've happened; I was thinking about how my parents were on the ground and I knew that they were watching."

Stress and panic can cause any of us to make rash decisions. It takes mental practice to calm down. Take a few breaths, focus on

the moment, follow the plan. And remember to breathe. "I panicked a bit, but I followed my training."

Maggie was a little shaky as she talked to the tower, but she executed a perfect belly landing that skidded on the infield grass. Her father couldn't be prouder.

"By the time I saw Maggie on her approach, it was a better approach than I could've flown," he said. Cheers erupted in the tower when she landed, and Maggie took a deep breath and climbed out of the plane.

Credit does go to the crew for talking her through the procedure. We all need someone to talk us through challenging times. But in the end, it was all Maggie at the controls.

We could all be forgiven for calling it quits after an ordeal like that. After all, it was a bit traumatic. So walking away would be understandable. But five days later, Maggie was going through her pre-flight safety inspections, checking under the hood, checking the wings, and especially checking the landing gear.

"It feels amazing," she said about being up in the air again. "It feels really freeing."

At some point in our lives, we will all be in a situation for the first time. It's scary. But if you face your fears, the whole world opens up to you.

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12

**Bringing the Moon
to your Living Room.**

How 14-Year-Old Philo Farnsworth Tinkered his Way to the Technology that Broadcast the Moon Landing.

14-year-old Philo Farnsworth wasn't looking up at the sky while plowing the field at his father's farm in Rigby, Idaho. He was looking down at the straight furrows that coursed over the earth.

That's when he had an epiphany: The same way the plow went back and forth over the field, an image could be scanned electronically and then transmitted line by line, much like furrows in a field. It was a vision of the first transmittable TV image.

Philo was a curious boy and was often lost in thought. When he was 12 years old, he was delighted to find that the farmhouse his family moved into was wired with electricity. He also discovered other treasures in the house: a cache of electronics magazines, a burned-out electric motor, and plenty of bits and pieces to tinker with.

He fixed the motor and converted his mother's hand-powered washing machine into an electric-powered one. At 14, he showed his high school teacher a handful of sketches of an electronic television system inspired by the furrows in the field. Encouraged by his science teacher, Philo covered several blackboards with diagrams.

Then Philo's father died when he was in high school. Philo went to work supporting his siblings and mother while keeping up his studies. He started a radio repair business; it failed. He briefly attended college, but his mind was on television, and so he

dropped out and began looking for somebody to fund his ideas. That opportunity came, and he traveled to Berkeley, California, with his new bride Pem to set up shop together.

The TV tube Philo developed would become the standard in broadcasting. Yet Philo Farnsworth spent years defending his patent and rebuilding his business after an economic crash.

The years had been turbulent. Like all of us, he had his share of challenges, perhaps more. But he kept pushing forward and registered hundreds of patents. Finally, on July 21, 1969, Neil Armstrong stepped out of Apollo 11 onto the moon's surface in an area called the Sea of Tranquility.

Philo Farnsworth was sitting in his living room with his wife Pem, watching the live feed — the image transmitting quickly, row by row like the furrows in a field. He turned to her and said: "Pem, this has made it all worthwhile."

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13

**A Tradition of Kindness
on the Appalachian Trail.**



The Appalachian Trail is a rugged footpath that runs from Northern Georgia to Central Maine along the crest of the Appalachian Mountains. It passes through 14 states and all kinds of unpredictable weather. At age 21, Nick, an avid outdoorsman raised in Maine, decided the journey would be a good adventure. The trek takes an average of 6 months. Hiking 20 miles a day through the wilderness for 5 or 6 months will get you to a place you've never been before.

"I guess I wasn't prepared for two things," says Nick. "How hard sections of the trail were going to be, and all the small acts of kindness along the way that kept me going." Those thru-hikers who complete the entire 2,200 miles talk about trail magic, little acts of kindness that happen at exactly the time they are needed. "I had been living on filtered water and granola bars for a month, my legs were aching, my body hurt, and I was having that once-a-week feeling of quitting. I came around a corner, and there was a bag of clementines hanging from a tree. A small thing at home, but on the trail, the taste of that fresh fruit was so amazing it kept me going for days."

As Nick learned, the people who live in the towns that border the trail see it as a privilege to give. "People blindsided you with kindness," Nick says. They provide rides into town when hikers need to replenish. They open their homes to a fresh shower after months on the trail. And they offer encouragement to keep going.

Sweet oranges are one thing. But after Nick's first two weeks on the trail, an unseasonable cold front hit Northern Georgia. Normal temperatures of 20 or 30 degrees Fahrenheit dipped down to 0, and the wind gusted through the

branches above. Nick remembers doing sit-ups in his thin sleeping bag all night to keep warm. "I got started early the next morning because I was so cold and had to get moving. I couldn't feel my toes until noon.

The next stop was a lean-to 20 miles away, and I decided that if the night was as miserable as the last, I would pack it in. It got dark, and really cold again. But when I entered the lean-to, somebody had brought up two down comforters---hiked the seven miles in from town hauling two comforters. I was so tired and relieved, I cried. I never slept better in my life."

Nick would go on, experiencing small acts of kindness that motivated him and discovering that his own small acts of kindness kept others going, too. "When you have extra food, you share it. You share a campfire. When it's raining sideways, you build a wall with rain ponchos. You work together. You encourage other thru-hikers to keep going," Nick says. "Once you get through Virginia, you get this energy high because you know you are part of something greater that will support you. You learn to trust it. Not rely on it, just trust it. Your hope develops. And when it's all over, you realize how great the people in this country are."

Trail magic is kindness in action, kindness without being seen. Kindness that becomes the change we all need.

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14

Sometimes the Wrong Direction is the Right Way.

How a Wrong Number, a Wrong Text and a Mix-Up Led to Long-Lasting Friendships.

Twenty years ago, Gladys Hankerson, who lives in Florida, dialed up her sister in Maryland for a chat. Or so she thought. But she misdialed the area code and reached Mike Moffit in Rhode Island.

Mike says Gladys was a bit embarrassed but very sweet. Gladys loves her sister and, of course, tried to call again a few days later — and made the same mistake on the area code. Mike answered again and recognized Gladys' voice. They had a nice chat and laughed about it.

Before long, Gladys started calling Mike just to say hi. And Mike began to call Gladys just to check in. Then one day, Gladys' son called Mike to tell him a close family member had passed away. They realized their friendship had deepened — and it carried on for 20 years.

"He's a very nice person," Gladys says of Mike. "I love him to death." They finally met when Mike was on vacation with his family in Florida and decided to stop by her house. "He made my day," Gladys says. "I hugged him, he hugged me, and we took a picture."

Across the country in Arizona, in 2016, Wanda Dench sent a text to her college-aged grandson inviting him to Thanksgiving dinner. But she got the number wrong and reached Jamal Hinton. When Hinton asked who had sent the message, Wanda sent a picture of herself.

"You're not my grandma," Jamal texted back. "Can I still get a plate tho?" Wanda replied: "Of course. That's what grandmas do ... feed everyone!" And for six years, Jamal has celebrated Thanksgiving with the Dench family.

For this group, 2020 was a tough year. The small family gathering was also to honor Wanda's husband Lonnie, who had recently passed away from COVID-19. It meant a lot to have Jamal there to remember Lonnie. "We're more of extended family and, best of all, friends," says Jamal.

In yet another community, Robert's wife asked him to drop some books off at a local elementary after a book drive. When he carried the books to the classroom on his lunch hour, the teacher mistook him for one of the volunteer tutors.

"Thank you for coming," the teacher said. "Isabella is struggling with comprehension and is a grade level behind. Here is a book and her worksheets."

Robert thought, "What the heck, I have time. I'll just sit down and help." Robert, an artist, sketched out drawings of words and illustrated their meanings. Isabella was delighted.

"I think that's when the light went on for her," Robert says. For a full year, Robert tutored Isabella on his lunch hours. Her reading comprehension quickly caught up and then shot past grade level. "It made my day, seeing her learn so fast," Robert says.

Sometimes life puts us in places where we are supposed to be. Whether we were headed that way or not, we just need to make the best of it.

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15

**Playtime is
for Everybody.**



A Dad Sells Off his Business and Builds a Theme Park for Disabled Kids.

Gordon Hartman just might be the leading candidate for “Dad of the Decade.” When his daughter Morgan was growing up, Gordon was heartbroken after watching her on the playground. Other children refused to play with her, mostly because her disabilities meant she couldn’t access the places where they were playing. The family tried other places but were never satisfied.

“What we found was there was no place that was an ultra-accessible, fully inclusive park,” Gordon said. So he went home and sold his construction business, bought an abandoned quarry, and went to work building an entire amusement park for disabled children.

All kids need playtime, and Morgan was no different. The park — named Morgan’s Wonderland — finally offered Morgan that opportunity. What the Hartmans discovered is that kids without disabilities enjoy the park just as much, and they interact a lot more with everyone when all are included. In fact, three-quarters of the park’s visitors are not disabled. And that makes it all the more fun.

Everybody enjoys the rides, from the carousel to the train. Each ride is specially designed to accommodate wheelchairs. Even the water park provides waterproof wheelchairs.

Watching the kids play together without barriers makes you realize that we are all the same, and having fun is for everybody. But it doesn’t end there. One-third of the staff also has special needs. Seeing

the way they interact also puts a smile on your face. They take their jobs seriously, and they make sure everybody is having fun.

How does it feel to see kids of all abilities having so much fun? “It feels fantastic because we get to see people who are not given the opportunity to experience the types of rides we have, get on a carousel, get on a train easily, go fishing,” says Gordon.

The park has been visited by people with special needs from over 67 countries. “When we opened this, we didn’t know if it was going to work,” says Gordon. “All we wanted to do was bring people who have special needs and people who don’t have special needs together and play.”

Just look at the smiles at Morgan’s Wonderland, and you’ll see how much good it does.

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16

**How Far would you
Go for a Friend?**



The Story of Dindim, the Penguin who Travels 5,000 Miles Every Year to Visit with its Rescuer.

On a typical day, off the coast of a small Brazilian island, Joao Pereira de Souza was headed out fishing. He was disheartened to find that an oil spill had contaminated the waters. Staring out at the waves with their greasy sheen, he decided it was not a good day to fish. But walking the beach that day, he found a struggling penguin, covered in oil and starving.

Pereira took the penguin home, gently cleaned it and spent the next week nursing it back to health. He named it Dindim, a Portuguese word meaning “ice pop.”

Dindim is a Magellanic penguin, a species known for living in the seas of South America. In order to breed, they must return to Patagonia, 8,000 kilometers (5,000 miles) from Pereira's home. Pereira patiently took Dindim back to the ocean and taught him how to swim again.

Soon enough, it was time for Dindim to return to life in the wild. Pereira watched Dindim swim away, believing it would be the last time he saw him.

But the next June, Dindim returned. The two shared a tender beak-to-nose greeting, and Dindim stayed for a month, waddling around the fisherman's house. The time to leave arrived, and Pereira thought this surely would be the last time he would see Dindim. But 11 months later, the penguin with a long memory returned again.

It is a common belief among scientists that animals have short memories. So a couple of them put a tracking device on Dindim to see if it was indeed the same penguin that returned year after year. To their surprise, but not Pereira's, Dindim returned, year after year, for more than a decade.

Love and nurture create a bond so deep that we can't always explain it. It's just something we feel, something we long to provide. And when we do, it lasts much longer than we ever expected.

Pereira and Dindim share a bond that bridges human life and the natural world. Their friendship is hope personified.

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17

Beatrice Shilling.

The Motorcycle Daredevil who Became a Mechanical Engineer and Saved the Lives of Countless Pilots in WWII.

Beatrice “Tilly” Shilling had a penchant for speed. In 1913, at age 14, she bought her first motorcycle. She tinkered with it and roared around the English countryside, eventually racing for the British Motorcycle Racing Club.

Tilly might have been fine living an adventurous life, racing around tracks at 100 mph. But the war changed the world and nearly everyone who lived through it. Rolls Royce was making engines for the Royal Air Force. The Spitfire was speedy and highly maneuverable, and there was a great need for engineers to keep up with production and innovation. Tilly soon proved her mettle and moved up the ladder quickly at the Royal Aircraft Establishment. She was a no-nonsense, self-confident, tireless tinkerer who stood up to top brass the same way she had lapped men in motorcycle races. When Spitfires were stalling during extreme dives at the Battle of Britain and costing the lives of pilots, Tilly led a team of engineers tasked with finding a solution, fast.

For Tilly, the key in motorcycle racing and engineering was the same: Stay calm and keep it simple. She developed a thimble-shaped carburetor insert that prevented the engine from flooding on extreme dives. Equipped with this simple device, the Spitfires could compete with the Luftwaffe, and the rest is history.

Perhaps the unsung hero in this story is Beatrice Shilling's first boss, Margaret Partridge. When Tilly was fresh out of secondary school, she got a job at an engineering company installing wiring and generators. Margaret — herself an electrical engineer — took it upon herself to nurture the next generation of women engineers and encouraged Tilly to study electrical engineering.

Armed with a little extra confidence, Tilly enrolled at Victoria University of Manchester and became an electrical engineer, her first step toward a career in aviation engineering and the legendary solution that helped win the Battle of Britain.

Without that bit of encouragement, who knows how the whole world would have turned out — let alone Beatrice Shilling.

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Hear more about Tilly Shilling on **["the PassItOn.com" Podcast.](https://www.passiton.com)**

18

From Homeless to Johns Hopkins.

**Life is Never Fair.
But if you Work Hard Enough,
and Help Someone Along the Way,
you Give Yourself a Better Chance
to Make it.**



Chris Smith looked like any other young boy in his class: bushy hair, a wide smile and enough freckles to charm a grandmother out of a whole jar of cookies. He played sports, working his way onto the football and wrestling teams. By all appearances, life for Chris was the same as it was for a hundred other boys in the small town where he grew up. Except for the constant evictions, living like a squatter without electricity and eventually being homeless.

Chris' father was reckless with finances and dishonest in business. His mother coped the best she could until Chris' little brother drowned, and his father went to jail. Then it all fell apart.

"My mom shut down emotionally. Everything got worse," Chris remembers. And then she was gone, moved on without telling Chris. He did the best he could, sleeping on his newly married sister's couch. "They didn't have much money, and I know it was a burden to take me in at 17 years old. I was just hoping to graduate from high school and make it on my own."

But Chris' history teacher had other ideas. When Chris began to falter on assignments, she cornered him. "You're the smartest kid in the class," she told him. "If you don't graduate, you're going to regret it."

A good mentor makes all the difference, and sometimes you need more than one to help you along. Chris' wrestling coach taught him how to work hard to value teamwork over individual achievement.

"School was my safe place," Chris says. He spent a lot of time in the library and the gym, ingesting the lessons of underdogs who overcame incredible odds to make it. School also offered heat and

food. It became the closest thing to home he could find, compared to his father's old Chevy truck that became his bed and his study space. He remembers his hair freezing onto the window in the winter.

When graduation came, Chris earned a full scholarship to college, but the load was heavy, and his grades slipped just enough to lose his funding. Still, Chris refused to give up. He found grants and loans, transferred to a smaller college and graduated in the top 10 of his class. And then on to bigger dreams.

Chris was accepted to medical school, got married and threw himself into the grind. That's when another challenge hit. A family member lost custody of her child, so Chris and his new wife adopted the baby girl and tried to balance life together.

When it came time to apply for medical residencies, Chris set his sights high. He applied to residencies around the country and included the No. 1 program in the nation: Johns Hopkins.

"I didn't really think I had a chance. But I had learned to give everything your best shot." And then the letter came. Chris was in.

They say dreams are made of hard work. Chris had to work harder than most. And now, as a practicing radiologist, he takes time to speak to students about what it takes to make it. "You can do it," he says, echoing the words of his history teacher. "You are the smartest kids in the world."

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19

**It's Not your Lifespan,
it's your Wingspan.**

How one Girl's 16 Years of Life Impacts Thousands.

Penny Doerge should have had a normal childhood, hanging out with friends and growing into adulthood before thinking about how she could change the world. But at an early age, Penny was diagnosed with neurofibromatosis, a condition that causes tumors and can lead to brain cancer.

The prognosis was not good. But Penny had a life to live and refused to live it in darkness. In fact, she chose to spread light to everyone around her.

During the pandemic, Penny created a series of small gatherings called adventure camps for the neighborhood kids. Each child had a COVID test at the door, and then the fun began. It was Penny's way of creating connections to overcome isolation. For those who couldn't attend, she made funny TikTok videos and shared her artwork for those who couldn't attend. She loved to use her creativity to make ordinary things beautiful.

When it was time for another surgery — she had 15 in all — Penny would go about it in a businesslike manner. No complaining, no crying, just get through it and get back to living. Her mother remembers, "Somebody said Penny was an actress and the world was her stage. She was joy personified."

Her teachers remember her as a hardworking girl everyone wanted to be around. She was happy and beautiful and artistically gifted. And she used those attributes to lift others. "She was a little angel," her grandfather remembers. "She was fun and happy. Penny taught us a lot." Her father adds, "She taught us how to treat other people.

Sometimes a very special person comes into this life to remind all those around her what we should really be about. We should make time to create beauty, and to share it. Penny's artwork made people happy. Her notes and videos made people forget about hard things and focus on good things. Her friendship brought a sense of hope to everyone who wanted to be close to her. Her pastor says, "Penny was and will continue to be a bright light for her family and friends."

Penny died at the age of 16. "She made a choice to live her life with joy and optimism," says her father.

That optimism continues to burn bright. Her family launched Penny's Flight, a foundation dedicated to inspiring others to live life as she did, according to the family's motto, "It's not your lifespan, it's your wingspan." The foundation raises money for cancer research and also celebrates life by sharing the message: Spread your wings. Shine your light.

Comedian Jimmy Fallon and former NFL quarterback Eli Manning have picked up the torch of Penny's cause. And so it glows. The brief life of a young girl touches thousands of lives and reminds us all that we can soar to new heights, no matter who we are.

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20

Billy Mills.

The Story Behind America's First and only 10,000-Meter Olympic Champion.

Billy Mills was born on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation for the Oglala Lakota people. His mother died when he was 9 years old.

Hurting from the loss, young Billy took up sports, believing an article given to him by a Jesuit priest that stated that Olympians are chosen by the gods.

"I wanted to be chosen by the gods," remembers Billy. And it had nothing to do with the Olympics. "I thought if I was chosen by the gods ... perhaps I would be able to see my mother again."

At first, he tried boxing, but after six losses and zero wins, he decided it wasn't for him. Neither was basketball, or football. So Billy started running. "It felt spiritual," Billy says. The life of a long-distance runner can be a lonely path you cannot share. That's where Billy discovered his oneness with the earth. His Lakota name means "Respects the Earth."

Billy ran his first race in jeans and basketball shoes. He finished dead last but fell in love with the sport. Then his father passed away, and with a broken heart, he stopped running. Being orphaned at 12 and feeling alone, Billy didn't run again until he reached high school. That's when a coach encouraged his students.

"One of you can do something magical in sport. One of you can become a great athlete," the coach said. "I felt it was my dad speaking to me," Billy remembers. He came out of high school with the fourth-fastest mile in the nation. He went on to the University of Kansas and

trained hard, hoping to make the Olympic team. He finished second in the trials and was on his way.

At the start of the 10,000-meter race in that 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games, Billy Mills, an orphaned boy from unknown Pine Ridge, South Dakota, lined up to run for his country, his parents, his people. As the race wore on, runners fell behind, lap after lap, until four led the pack. With one lap to go, he was nudged out of his lane from behind, then bumped off his stride again. He was struggling at a distant fourth place.

As he lapped one of the slower runners, he recalls, "I look, and out of the corner of my eye, on his jersey, I saw an eagle. It was my dad. 'You have the wings of an eagle.'" In the last 100 meters, an unheard-of Billy Mills broke into a dead sprint from lane four and strode his way into the history books with an Olympic record. He later found the runner he had passed and looked closely at his jersey. There was no eagle.

"It was simply a perception," Billy remembers. "Perceptions create us or destroy us, but we have that opportunity to create our own journey."

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21

**Getting 100 on
her Final Exam.**

**Nola Ochs Went Back to College at 95
Years Old. At Age 100, she had Earned
her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees
and was Still Taking Classes.**



Nola Ochs was born in Kansas in 1911, one year before the state amended the constitution to recognize women's right to vote. Back then, Kansas was a patchwork quilt of counties traversed by roads and railroad tracks all converging in Kansas City. A sea of wheat rolling across the plains would later inspire the lyric "amber waves of grain." There were farms and more farms, and everybody had a job to do.

Nola Ochs was raised under the endless sky, and the long arc of the sun marked her chore-filled days. Her life was not extraordinary by most measures. She grew and married, had children and grandchildren, taught in rural schools, and lived the quiet Midwest life. But she was different in one notable way: After her husband died in 1972, Nola began taking classes and eventually earned her associate degree at age 77.

"I still wanted to go to school. It was fun to go to classes. And if I had an assignment to do in the evening, that occupied my time in a pleasant way," she recalled. After some years went by, Nola again got the bug to learn. She emailed an academic advisor at Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kansas, mentioning that she had taken a course from the university years earlier.

After some digging, the advisor located a 3x5 card stored in the basement of the administration building stating that Nola had indeed been a student, in 1930. When the advisor emailed back, she asked, "Nola, how old are you?"

Learning takes time, and moving through courses must be done on your own time, at your own pace. When Nola had 30 hours of school left to complete, she moved 100 miles away from her farm,

got an apartment and attended classes in person. She graduated with her granddaughter in 2007.

Nola could have been finished then with her long life of learning. She was, after all, 95 years young. "I don't dwell on my age," Nola said back then. "It might limit what I can do. As long as I have my mind and health, it's just a number."

Nola decided to keep going. She lived in the student dorms and got her master's degree in liberal studies with an emphasis on history three years later, at age 98.

What keeps us young is not comparing ourselves to others. It is not the latest health craze. What keeps us young is a passion for learning everything we can about the world we live in. It's about seeing everyone we meet as a teacher, knowing they have something worthwhile to offer.

Nola lived a long and productive life, but her work was still not done. As the sun bent its great arc across the sky, Nola was at work, plowing the fields of her mind, harvesting the best bits into a memoir.

A hundred years yields a lot of wisdom. But it's the process that can teach us all. Learn everything you can. Share your crops with the neighbors. And never, never give up on yourself. At 105, Nola finished her memoir.

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22

**The Little Things that
Make the Biggest Difference.**



How One Man Created a Forest the Size of Central Park by Planting One Tree a Day.

Jadav Payeng lives in a remote part of India, in a place mostly unknown to the rest of the world. The Brahmaputra River is one of the largest rivers in the world. It begins at the base of the Himalayas, at the confluence of a fan of rivers that drain snowmelt. In the midst of this miles-wide river, there is an island, Majuli. And on that island is a community of fishermen. This is where Jadav was born.

At 16 years old, Jadav noticed a number of snakes washed up on the dry sandbar after a flood. Villages redirecting the river upstream had created more forceful currents around the island, and erosion was quickly taking its toll on the land and the natural habitats of its fauna. In fact, much of the island had become barren sand, and an entire community was at risk of being displaced.

Jadav also noticed that nobody was doing anything about it besides watching their part of the world disappear. So, he started planting trees — every day, one or two or three at a time on the barren sandbars. He took note of how they grew, harvested their seeds, grew saplings in his hut and planted before going off to work.

Standing beside one of the first trees he planted 40 years ago, Jadav will tell you that it is a little thing, something anyone can do. The tree is easily five times Jadav's girth. It stands in the middle of a forest the size of Central Park: 550 hectares.

There are now native grasses that have taken root in the shade and varieties of native trees grown from seeds that have washed ashore. The forest has become home to myriad animals: deer, Bengal tigers, Indian rhinoceros and even a herd of 100 elephants that visit every year. But most importantly, the island that is also home to a few hundred people is holding its own against the elements.

Each of us has our row to hoe in this life, a small piece of the world to cultivate. By doing the little things right, we take care of those around us and those who will come after us.

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23

**Running to Win isn't Always
Running to Come in First.**

Jacqueline Nyetipei Kiplimo Demonstrates what Really Matters in Life and in Sports.

The marathon is one of the most difficult races in track and field, at a little over 42 kilometers (26.2 miles). Most marathoners will tell you their bodies hold up for the first 30 kilometers; the last 10 kilometers are all mental toughness. To be a world-class marathoner, you must run that distance in 2 1/2 hours. But for some, achieving a marathon finish is a lifelong dream.

Jacqueline Nyetipei Kiplimo's dream of being a world-class runner began when she was a child in Kenya. She soon realized she had the talent and the willpower to compete. She also knew she would have to train full-time, which meant not being able to work to help support her family. But she was confident that she could bring home prize money.

Jacqueline traveled to China to compete in the Zhenkai marathon knowing she had a good shot at winning the race, but more importantly, the \$10,000 prize that went with it.

She was leading the women's division when a male runner arrived at the water station at the 20-kilometer mark. The man was running at a good pace but had trouble staying hydrated because a birth defect had left him without hands, and he struggled to drink from the slippery plastic bottles. But any assistance from fans or race officials would result in his disqualification. Jacqueline noticed the man and immediately knew that he needed help.

She grabbed a water bottle and helped him get the fluid his body needed to complete the race. Then she ran at his pace with the bottle and helped him sip while they strode along.

Runner after runner passed Jacqueline. Her hopes of winning were getting lost in the melee of runners ahead of her. With only 4 kilometers left in the race, and certain that her new friend would now finish, Jacqueline picked up her pace. Her long stride kicked in, and she weaved through the fading competitors to finish second.

That day, Jacqueline missed out on first place, but she finished with something more important: her humanity. When asked about the bigger cash prize, she said that money isn't everything. She returned home with the smaller prize of second place, but to her seven younger siblings, she brought home something much more valuable to her seven younger siblings: the right example.

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24

**Winning at the
Game of Life.**

College Football Player Gives Up his Scholarship to Make More Possible for a Teammate.

No team wins every game. And, like the game itself, sometimes life feels unfair. For most student athletes in all sports, the support they get from their teammates is what helps them get through the challenge of balancing work, school and athletics. The lessons learned are valuable for life. It's never going to be easy. Career, family, and the unpredictable nature of both can bring trials that test your character.

Football is one of those sports that develops a strong bond between teammates. It requires every member to trust the player next to him. Trying to juggle the financing of an education can be the most difficult play of the season. At Eastern Michigan University, offensive lineman Zack Conti was doing everything he could to keep up with team practices, studies and paying his way. He was even donating plasma regularly to help cover expenses. By his teammates' assessments, he was one of the hardest-working players on the team. But he was not on scholarship.

That's when his teammate Brian Dooley stepped in. Dooley's scholarship was one of only 85 allotted to Eastern Michigan by the NCAA. As Chris Creighton, head football coach, explains, schools can petition for more, they can beg and plead. But the rule is hard and fast: 85 scholarships. Period.

So Dooley did the unimaginable. He talked to his family, and then he went to his coach. Creighton remembers: "Brian Dooley comes

into my office and he says, 'Coach, that guy has earned it. And I've talked this over with my family. If there is a way to make this happen, I am willing to give up my scholarship as a gift to Zack Conti.' I've never seen anything like that ever before."

At a team meeting, Coach Creighton made the announcement, and Dooley walked over and handed Conti the scholarship. The team erupted in cheers, and Conti was soon buried beneath a huddle of cheering teammates pounding him on the back, jumping up and down in celebration.

When asked about the incredible gift, Dooley shared, "I did it because I've seen Zack grow over the years. Seeing him walk away from something that he loves did not sit well with me. He works hard and gets in extra work with me all the time. In my eyes, he earned it 100%. Giving up my scholarship so he can stay and play means everything."

In the throes of competition, true character is revealed. We hear too often about the occasional bad apples. But competition can shape us to be better people. Through competition, we can learn that a team isn't really about competing at all but cooperating to reach a united goal.

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25

Never, Ever
Give Up.



The Incredible Story of the 12-Year-Old Cancer Patient who Brings Joy to Half a Million Children Fighting Cancer.

Life can feel terribly unfair. And yet for some people, when life hands them the worst possible circumstance, they are at their absolute best.

Jessie Joy Rees is just such a person. The blonde-haired, California kid with the big personality as fun as a day at the beach became the voice of courage for kids with cancer. How can so much good be packaged in one so small? Athletic and outgoing, Jessie had her whole world in front of her, until she was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor in 2011.

Three weeks into her treatment, Jessie asked an uncharacteristically mature question for such a young girl. She looked out at the other children who were also going through cancer treatment and asked her parents: "How can we help them?" Jessie's heart was bigger than any tumor. She wanted to comfort other kids who were going through treatment; she wanted them to be happy, no matter what.

The morning after her diagnoses, Jessie was at the kitchen table assembling bags of toys for other cancer patients. "She was determined to make other cancer kids happy," her father Erik tenderly remembers. "How could we not help?"

12-year-old Jessie had a 1% chance of beating cancer. So, she decided to make the most of her time. The packages became

hospital-safe plastic jars stuffed with toys, crafts and activities to surprise children while they are in the hospital for treatment. Aptly named JoyJars® using Jessie's middle name, JoyJars contain a little bit of fun during mundane days, but mostly they contain a little bit of Jessie's optimism that fills the room every time one is opened. One mother sent a tender thank you: "JoyJars have helped lift our spirits during Travis' ongoing battle with his brain tumor."

It is a special soul who can radiate so much good in so short a time. Jessie Joy Rees passed away less than a year from her diagnosis. But her parents keep the joy alive. More than 400,000 JoyJars have been delivered to children undergoing cancer treatment in all 50 states and over 50 countries.

For each, there is a bit of Joy to help them through the tough times. And to give them courage, there's also a bracelet stamped with Jessie's mantra: Never Ever Give Up. "Jessie would never ever give up," says Erik. "And neither will we. Every child facing cancer should know they are loved and supported."

*[For more information visit
www.negu.org](http://www.negu.org)*

No matter how long or short our lives turn out to be, there is always room for a little joy.

**NEVER, EVER GIVE UP...
PassItOn.com®**

*By The Foundation
for a Better Life®*



The Foundation for a Better Life® is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote positive values. The TV PSAs, billboards and other media provide inspiring and uplifting messages seen in over 195 countries. The examples of individuals living values-based lives motivates people to bring out the best in themselves. We believe these messages are making a difference in the world.

We do not participate in fundraising and have no political or religious agenda. This global effort is built on the belief that people are basically good and appreciate uplifting reminders, encouraging them to do the right thing. Developing positive values and passing them on to others is The Foundation for a Better Life.



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