

Pass It On®...

Family of 7 Adopts a Grandpa.

Friends come in all shapes, sizes, and ages. But love is universal.

When Sharaine and Wilson moved their family to Rhode Island, they already had a houseful. Five kids, a hectic schedule, a long list of house projects and a whole new neighborhood meant little time for anything else. And then Paul showed up.

At 82 years old, Paul had just lost his wife, but he was still handy and helpful. He trudged across the street carrying a ladder to meet the new neighbors and offer a little help with fix-up projects.

Sharaine remembers, "Our biggest fear moving into a new neighborhood was *what if the new neighbors don't like us? We have a lot of kids; they make a lot of noise ...*" But those fears were quickly put to rest. Paul knows a lot about tools and maintaining a house built long before Sharaine and Wilson were even born, and he soon became a fixture in the family.

At a time when divisiveness is prevalent on the news and suspicions are at an all-time high, Paul seemed oblivious to any tension. He simply offered help. Sharaine and Wilson had no problem making a new friend. And neither did the kids. Paul makes sure they cross the street safely after school, is the judge of tricycle races, sits on the porch helping with homework and pulls out his dentures as a reminder to the little ones to brush their teeth.

As extended families extend their range across the country, limiting how often they can gather, it helps to have a grandpa across the street. Children adjust to life's challenges better when they have multigenerational support. Grandparents bring stability, love, encouragement and a sense of responsibility to a child. And grandparents who regularly interact with their grandkids are less likely to succumb to the epidemic of loneliness in this country. Still, the science of well-being is not something Paul thinks much about. He is too busy being a grandpa.

"The kids run up to him like that's their grandpa," Sharaine says. And that keeps Paul busy. There are birthdays, home projects, neighborhood cookouts and all those home projects. The wisdom

and pace of the older generation is good for the frenetic times we find ourselves in. Doing the simple things like reading, pulling a few weeds, walking slowly while the clouds move across the sky, hiding the sun ... these are the moments life is most made up of. It takes a grandpa to slow things down to an appreciable pace. And once there, holding hands makes the moment feel more secure. A good laugh lifts a little weight off the shoulders, and a good story becomes a life lesson.

Grandparents are a treasure because they bring us back to what is most important. Expanding our circles to include those who have so much history and patience expands our ability to feel.

"It doesn't hurt to be nice," Sharaine says. "It costs you nothing, but a lot of the time, you get a better return."

Family...PassItOn.com

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