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BFL News and Views

January 2012



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Products are a great way to support any bucketfilling initiative, whether at home or in the classroom. For example, t-shirts for parents as well as for the children reflect bucketfilling unity throughout the family!

Heartspeak is the exclusive source of Bucketfillers For Life products and more.

- Posters
- Pencils
- Classroom Learning Package
- Bracelets
- Sunglasses
- Piggy Banks
- Backpacks
- T-shirts
- Coffee Mug
- More!

Be sure to also get your copy of *True Bucketfilling Stories: Legacies of Love*, by Stacey A. Lundgren.

Right This Second, Everything is Great: Helping Children Find the Value in Everyday Moments

By Kelly Nickel, M. Ed - Regional Director, Western U.S.

"Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things." - Robert Brault

I'll admit, in our family we do join in on the party and make a big deal out of New Year's Eve. Being part of a world-wide ritual celebrating human renewal allows us to feel connected to millions of people just like us all over the world. Our style these days is to just stay at home with our three kids, struggle to keep them (and ourselves) awake and occupied until the ball drops, and then be glad we powered through it to mark this special moment in time.

It is interesting that so many people put so much significance upon that single moment in time when the clock strikes midnight on New Year's Eve. As I have explained it to my children, celebrating the New Year is a chance for us to think about and appreciate the gift of our lives, and imagine some of the ways that we want to live better,

do better, or be better. It's a chance to reflect on our year, celebrate our accomplishments, forgive ourselves for our mistakes, and make future commitments to ourselves and others.

Of course, the fact that we are able to do this on a special occasion is evidence



that we could also do it any time we wanted, even daily. My eight year-old daughter Kimberly grasped this notion when she innocently asked, "If it's so important, how come people don't do it every night?"

Good question. As educators, we certainly recognize the important role that reflection plays in helping us to improve our instruction. We strive to teach our students to use reflection as a means of feeding forward their own learning and de-

velopment. We know that good reflection can be good for us in many areas of our lives. So how can we use the occasion of an overly-hyped annual world-wide celebration (like New Year's Eve) to help children learn to use reflection to appreciate their lives and feel better about themselves?

We do it by encouraging them to look for the hidden value in those seemingly unremarkable everyday moments of their lives. In a way it is like panning for gold. As scientist Daniel Kahneman suggests, every day we humans will experience thousands of individual "moments" in time. Some will be noticeably big, so big in fact that we will come to think of them as our Big Moments. These would be like the large nuggets of gold that show up in our pan. But the vast majority of our daily experiences will be so subtle and pass so quickly that we may not even notice they are occurring. These would be like the smaller, hard to see specks of gold that might get inadvertently tossed back into the creek should we not be paying

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enough attention. While big nuggets are great, it is also true that tiny specks will add up in value over time.

We can teach children to collect the value in everyday experiences through simple active reflection. It can be as easy as asking themselves, "What just happened, how did it make me feel, and what do I

think about it?" The final step of the process is to then assign a descriptive word or phrase to the moment that gives it a value. Many descriptors are available, from "okay" to "good" to "amazing" all the way to "epic!" We can also challenge children to keep expanding their descriptor word vocabulary to account for the nuanced differences of value they will experience mo-

ment by moment. This way they are enhancing their language arts skills while learning to appreciate every moment of life.

Blessings to each of you for your efforts to make the world a more positive place. I wish for you a wonderful 2012 filled millions of wonderful, valuable moments.

Good News of the Month

This month's good news comes from Mitchell Schmidt at the Des Moines Register.

Anonymous gift keeps water on for 17 households

IOWA CITY, IA. — An anonymous Iowa City woman has given an unexpected gift to several residents.

The woman walked into City Hall on Nov. 22 and, after paying her own water bill, donated \$1,640 to pay off delinquent balances on 17 other local water utility accounts to ensure they had running water, Iowa City revenue manager Melissa Miller said Wednesday.

Miller, who's been with the Department of Revenue since 2005, said staff members were completely caught off guard by the woman's gesture.

"We were just in shock," Miller said. "She obviously wanted to help these individuals out, and we tried to make it as easy as possible for her."

Eleven of the accounts had their water shut off on Nov. 22 because of unpaid balances, with the remaining six scheduled to be shut down by the end of that day. Water for those individuals was turned back on shortly after the payment, Iowa City public works director Rick Fosse said.

"It was a wonderful thing that she did," Fosse said. "And the timing was just perfect with it being just before Thanksgiving. Our folks went back out and turned (the water) back on so they did have water for the holidays."

Miller said the woman asked to

remain unidentified.

"I've never seen it happen, and the majority of my staff has been here much longer than I have, and they haven't heard of anything like it either," Miller said. "It was a wonderful gesture."

Members of the staff helped the woman identify several accounts with unpaid balances, and the donor offered \$1,639.57 of her personal money.

"She just really wanted to help these people," Miller said.

The revenue department will mail letters to all 17 account owners notifying them of the recent payment on their account.



Musings From the Bucket Man

By Merrill Lundgren "The Bucket Man"

The Bucket Man is taking a break

from his column this month, while his wife of 68 years, Edna, recovers from a fall she took late on Christmas Eve. She is expected to recover

fully from the fall, but as usual, Dad's priorities are in the right place.