

LITTLE THINGS MEAN A LOT!

The Magic Of Making A Difference In Your Life And The Lives Of Others!

By Rick Rossini

If I had told my wife Suzanne, when she became a School Principal that she would one day travel halfway around the world to help save a school in Africa, I am sure she would have thought my crystal ball needed a new bulb. Even I would have questioned my psychic prediction.

However, life is stranger than fiction and just a few short months ago Suzanne Rossini, Principal of St. Vincent's Catholic School in Oakville, did indeed make such a trip, and as a result help positively impact the lives of many others.

The magic all began about 70 years ago in a very small village called Kedzi which is in a remote area of Ghana, West Africa. It was 1933 that the Kedzi school was first opened by an American Missionary Sister Florence Randolph. Needless to say, the school very rapidly became the heart and soul of this primitive, but very proud and caring community.

And as the only form of education for many surrounding villages, at it's height the school's attendance was over 650 students with 26 teachers. Students from all ages would literally walk miles every day eager for the chance to receive any education. However, for all that could attend there are many, many others that just could not. But suddenly ANY chance of education was about to be wiped out!

You see the village and the school is precariously situated on a narrow strip of land with the Atlantic Ocean on one side and the Kedzi Lagoon on the other. This location, while ideal for the communities' primary occupation of fishing and salt harvesting, has proved physically disastrous due to the constant flooding and erosion of the land. In fact, presently, the Atlantic Ocean is almost at the school's front doors.

As a result of this erosion many people have had to leave the area and the school now has shrunk to 400 students and only 13 teachers. But believe it or not, things were about to get worse.

In 1996 the Government of Ghana initiated the Keta Sea Defense Project to provide protection from this flooding and erosion to much of the coastline and most of Kedzi. It is a massive, expensive shore protection undertaking that involves years of design and construction.

However, as a cost saving measure, the decision was made by the government not to protect the school and the nearby church.

The bottom line was simple, in order for the community to survive as a culture and for any education to be offered to the area the school must be moved to a higher protected zone. The cost is \$150,000 US; that's with the entire village physically pitching in to help move it. Thankfully however, some "magical people" decided to step in and help as well!

You see, much of the Keta Sea Defense project is being completed by two North American Companies. These two organizations and some special individuals therein decided to help the

village raise the necessary funds and much needed support. Besides volunteering of their own time and money, a special program was created that was destined to unite and share with students of these different cultures.

The initiative was called “Kids 4 Kedzi”, and it made magic happen! It got a half dozen schools involved in helping to solve this problem. It allowed students and people of all ages to share with one another on opposite sides of the globe. It united technology, people and ideals. It’s what learning, caring and being human are all about!!

My wife’s school, just like the others, held numerous fund raising and awareness awaking programs. These programs not only saw the student’s generating donations with their own initiatives, but actually sharing their pictures, thoughts, words, video recordings, gifts, comments and questions with their counterparts in Kedzi. However, none of this could prepare my wife for the emotional encounter she was about to have.

Suzanne was invited by the Ghanain government, the construction and engineering companies and the Kedzi school to accompany the project engineer to Kedzi to participate in the Land Allotment Ceremony of the new school.

As we packed, crammed and stuffed the two huge hockey bags with much needed school supplies donated by parents and artwork from the students, my wife shared with me a most touching story.

On the day before leaving for Kedzi the school custodian came into her office and handed her three crisp twenty dollar bills. Suzanne stared at him in surprise. He holds down another job while his wife baby-sits their grandchildren. He said he wanted her to give this money to the first three individuals who appeared to need it the most. At first, she refused to take it. However, he insisted and so she tucked the bills away into her wallet.

While attending the Land Allotment Ceremony, celebrating the release of a parcel of land for the construction of the new school, she noticed several children standing on the periphery of the ceremony without school uniforms. Suzanne later discovered that there is a fee for sending a child to school in Ghana, approximately \$4 a year, and there were parents who could not afford this every year.

Right then and there she new what she must do; donate the custodian’s money to the school for the purposes of sending needy children to school.

As their custom, the Ghanains wanted to hold a ceremony whereby the money could be presented to the school headmaster with the prospective students, parents, grandparents and friends in attendance. However, there was still one more surprise Suzanne was about to get. Suzanne saw two teachers from this school at this ceremony, their own children were now able to attend!! After many years of teaching others, they now could finally send their own children to school. Their gratitude was overwhelming.

This story brought tears to the custodian’s eyes.

Imagine how something so little meant a great deal to the direction these children's lives will now take.

The people of Kedzi are a most magical people whose desire to help themselves and have faith in what is possible is limitless. They want their culture, their community, and their family to thrive! They are committed to doing everything that is possible to assist in building the new school: they want to be a part of this important process.

However, from time to time we can all use a little help.

We must never forget that we can all make a difference. Our belief in what is right and in helping others is where the magic begins. We can all plant a magic seed that can grow and truly make a difference!

Remember Real Magic can happen only when people believe in themselves and are passionate about making a difference in their own life and the lives of others! Have focus! Be passionate about what you do! Create your own real magic!!

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Rick Rossini has been a professional speaker, entertainer, magician, writer, corporate communicator, consultant, and producer for over thirty years. He has worked his special presentations as promotional, educational, and motivational vehicles for hundred of companies and hundreds of thousands of people all throughout the world. From the boardrooms of New York to the stage of the Sony Centre he has written, created, produced, and performed for a myriad of corporate presentations, educational venues, television, film, and video programs, and theatrical productions. All designed to inspire, excite, entertain, educate, and motivate! Experience the MAGIC!

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