

COMPASSIONATE HEARTS GAZETTE

Nonprofit News That Matters!

A Community Newspaper Dedicated to Featuring News that Doesn't Make it to the Big-Name Newspapers

April 2021



April is National Volunteer Month: Honoring Nonprofit Volunteers All Around the World for their Dedication and Support

By: Staff Writer.

USA - In the United States, volunteerism is instilled at a young age. In many parts of the country, it is the cornerstone of summer vacation or woven into after school programs. Most organizations in small towns, rural counties and the largest cities would not function without volunteers. In some families, the baton of volunteerism is handed down generation after generation.

Rural fire and ambulance departments remain staffed due to the efforts of volunteers. The underprivileged receive much needed medical care thanks to volunteers. Long overdue repairs and upgrades are made to a senior women's home thanks to an organization's annual call for donations and skilled workers. A woman answers a call on a suicide hotline because she cared enough to give up a few hours to train and listen to someone desperate and alone. A team sets up tables at a soup kitchen every week. Another group delivers meals to men and women who can no longer cook for themselves. Boys and girls sell ice cream sandwiches during a fair to raise money for a homeless shelter.

Volunteers come in all shapes and sizes. They pick a cause and make a difference in someone's life. Sometimes the difference is a drop in the bucket. Other times it creates a tidal wave of change. From the anonymous volunteers who donate their resources to those whose efforts are part of larger national organizations like 4-H, Boy and Girl Scouts of America,

American Red Cross or a local grassroots group, their missions provide valuable support to communities in times of need.

HOW TO OBSERVE

- * Thank a volunteer.
- * Volunteer. You don't have to have a ton of time. Do you have a special talent or skill that may benefit a charity or organization? Offer your services or ask how you can be of help.
- * Use #NationalVolunteerMonth to share on social media.

HISTORY

April became National Volunteer Month as part of President George H. W. Bush's 1000 Points of Light campaign in 1991.

This story first appeared in
<https://nationaldaycalendar.com/>

**To Our CHUF Volunteers...
THANK YOU for your service
and support. It is supporters like
you who make our mission a
success!**

Featured Stories



**CHUF was Awarded
2020 Small Business of the Year**

Page 3

Day of Compassion



**CHUF'S New Program:
The "Day of Compassion" Project**

Page 4

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Nonprofit News that Matters

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Founder / Editor's Message

By: M.C. Reyes

Hi Guys!

Welcome to The Compassionate Hearts Gazette. In case you are reading this newspaper for the first time, let me share our story with you.

On May 11 of 2019, my oldest daughter graduated from college. On that day, during the commencement acts, I was not only watching her become an adult, but I was also listening to one of the most motivational speeches I have heard in my life.

You see, the guest speaker was a prior student who, after graduating, went ahead and created her own community magazine. She had no idea what she was doing. All she knew was that she wanted to run her own magazine and that nothing was going to stop her... not even her inexperience.

Fast forward two months (this was back in July 2019), there I was, running my own community newspaper. A dream that started many years ago when I got my first rejection letter for an opinion article that I had written for the Orlando Sentinel. That rejection letter did a number on me and made me stop writing for a while... until one day, I tried again and, this time, the piece was published by them and, with that, came my new desire to become a journalist and to finally create my community newspaper.

My dream of starting the newspaper came with a lot of challenges, and one of them was being stationed overseas for three years due to my husband's active-duty military status. At that time, we were sent to Zimbabwe, Africa, and my dreams of starting my beloved newspaper were put, once again, on the back burner.

In May 2016, we came back to the United States after my husband retired from the military and, after dealing with many health issues, I finally decided that it was time for me to make my dream of becoming a freelance writer for major publications come true... that was until one day, I received another rejection letter... this time from The New York Times. On that day, I again stopped writing and became involved in a program called Vet Voices to try to fill the void I had in my life.

Believe me when I say that Vet Voices was a gift sent from heaven.

They not only gave my life a different meaning but also made me realize that there was a light at the end of the tunnel.

During my daughter's commencement ceremony, I had another gift sent from heaven... and this time it came in the form of a fellow journalist who, like me, had a dream. But, the difference between her and I was that she made hers become a reality, even when she had all the odds against her, and I was still wondering how to make mine come true. But, her speech made me realize that it was time to do it... that it was time for me to stop procrastinating... that it was time for me to stop allowing my fears to control my dreams.

On that day, I snapped out of my self-pity and decided that it was time... that the time for making my dream come true had arrived and that I needed to put my big girl pants on and do it. And I did. Oh boy, I did. The next day after that commencement ceremony, I took the first step and created the first page of my nonprofit community newspaper, which I tentatively called The Haines City Herald, but later on that night, I changed it to The Northeast Polk Gazette after my husband asked me to think bigger, which I did.

Now, here I am, writing this piece to present to you my biggest dream, my new baby, and the result of my hard work, which I have renamed the Compassionate Hearts Gazette so that the name goes in accordance with the mission we are trying to do.

The truth is that this newspaper is not a typical newspaper. With this nonprofit community newspaper, I not only want to bring news that matters into our communities, but I also want to use it as a way to give back to our community since a portion of our ad sales will be used to support other nonprofit organizations.

I hope you guys give this newspaper a chance.. give me a chance to show you what hard work and dedication looks like. I promise you, I will not disappoint you.

Thank you in advance for your support.

With Love, Marielys Camacho-Reyes (M.C. Reyes)

Interested in making a donation to our nonprofit? Visit our website at www.compassionateheartsunited.org to find out about the ways you can support our organization.

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News From Our "Compassionate Hearts Project" Team

Compassionate Hearts UNITED Had a Busy Start of the Year



CHUF's Founder with the 2020 Small Business of The Year award.

By: Staff Writer.

Haines City - On January 28, 2021, the Compassionate Hearts UNITED Foundation, Inc. was awarded the 2020 small business of the year award by the Northeast Polk Chamber of Commerce during their 42nd Annual Chamber Awards Banquet.

CHUF's Founder, Mrs. Marielys Camacho-Reyes, was present during the ceremony and she accepted the award on behalf of the Compassionate Hearts team.

"We want to dedicate this award to our donors, volunteers, and supporters for believing in our mission and for trusting us with their donations and their time because, without their support, we wouldn't have been able to help as many families as we did in 2020," said Mrs. Camacho-Reyes to the audience during the acceptance of the award.



CHUF's Founder with participants of the Northeast Polk Chamber of Commerce Adult Leadership Course.

By: Staff Writer.

Haines City - Our Founder had the privilege and honor of speaking today with a group of Polk County business owners and professionals who are part of the Northeast Polk Chamber of Commerce Adult Leadership Course.

During the chat, she shared with the group the importance of becoming agents of positive social change in our community.

Thank you Northeast Polk Chamber of Commerce and all the other participants for allowing us the opportunity to talk to you guys about our organization.



By: Staff Writer.

Haines City - Last night, we had the honor of attending the Ridge Community Girls Basketball annual banquet and watch these amazing group of girls being recognized for their hard work and dedication.

It's not every day you get to see hard work and dedication play before your eyes, but we had the privilege of seeing it through these amazing group of girls and coaches.

We are so happy to be part of this great program and to be able to help them reach their goals not only on the court but also in their personal lives. We can't wait to see what the next season will bring.

**Job Well Done,
CHUF!**

In the Spotlight

CHUF'S New Project: The "Day of Compassion" Project



By: Staff Writer.

Haines City - In 1997, Scott Plous, a psychology professor at Wesleyan University and Executive Director of Social Psychology Network, developed an action teaching assignment in which students are challenged to behave as compassionately as possible for 24 hours and then analyze the experience. He called this assignment the "Day of Compassion."

The purpose of the assignment is to help students understand compassion—and barriers to compassion—in their daily life.

As a result of the assignment, students have reportedly resolved conflicts with estranged family members, helped refugees and homeless strangers, rescued animals, volunteered at soup kitchens, donated to food drives, and carried out many other acts of kindness. Students also frequently report positive social reactions to their acts of compassion and a desire to continue carrying out such acts in the future.

The Compassionate Hearts UNITED Foundation wants to join forces with Professor Plous and would like to invite students around the Polk County area to participate in the "Day of Compassion" project.

Instructions on the project:

1) Complete your day of compassion. Students are asked to "live each minute of that day in as compassionate a way as possible. In other words, for a full 24-hour period you should do your best to reduce suffering, help other people in need, be considerate and respectful, and avoid causing harm to any living being."

2) Write a 500-word essay answering the following questions:

- *How did you define compassion, and who were the recipients of your efforts?
- * If your behavior was different than normal, which person did you like more: the "Day of Compassion you" or the "normal you"? If you preferred the "Day of Compassion you," what are the psychological factors that prevent this "you" from coming out?
- * How did others respond to your compassion? Do you think they noticed a difference in your behavior?
- * If you wanted to encourage others to behave as you did during the Day of Compassion, what techniques would you use?
- * What is your message to other people about having compassion for others in the community?

3) Send the essay as an attachment (in PDF version) to us via email to marielyscr@chufinc.org

4) At the end of each month, we will select a winning essay, and a donation will be made to the nonprofit selected by the student. Winning essays will be featured on our CHUF e-gazette at the end of the year.

For more information about this amazing opportunity, please contact us at marielyscr@chufin.org, and as we always say... "In a world where you could be anything, please, be compassionate... be kind... because, at the end of the day, we are all in this together."

"Be Compassionate!"

Mind, Body, Soul: Wholeness

"No" is a Complete Sentence



By: Shelly Tygielski.

"No" is a word most of us use too infrequently. And, what's worse, when we say "No" we usually add on all sorts of wheedly explanations. But "No" is a complete sentence, and here's why.

Saying "no" is all about creating personal boundaries that allow you to focus your time doing the things that will make the most impact.

Here are 3 ways to say "no" so you can choose how you spend your time.

Let's start by agreeing on this premise: If we don't know how to say "no" to things, then saying "yes" loses meaning.

If we say "yes" to everything, we are actually building movements and communities that are based on the models and standards we are trying to fight against. You know these standards well, the ones that are impossible to live up to and are fueled by capitalism, a culture that prizes busy-ness and causes people to curate their lives to perfection on social media.

In part 2 of our self-care series, we're focussing on the word "no" because it's the anchor for everything "yes" in our lives.

Saying "no" is difficult for so many people because saying it brings feelings of guilt. We feel like we're not doing enough and that things are going to fall apart without our personal involvement. Of course, logically, we know this isn't true. We realize that with everything happening in the world, even if we were capable of working 24/7, it still wouldn't be enough. Yet, the guilty feelings prevail.

On top of this, our culture places an unrealistic value on the pursuit of busyness. Society tells us that if we aren't working on something, anything, we are just wasting time. Thus, if the reason we are saying "no" is so that we can find time to do something for ourselves or, perhaps, even manage to do "nothing at all" (gasp!), we feel unworthy.

Even when we finally muster up the courage to say "no" or "I can't," we then feel obligated to offer up an explanation to justify this unfavorable response. That's why I'd like you all to consider for a moment that the word "no" is actually a complete sentence.

"No." Period. End of sentence.

Saying the word "no" when someone asks you to do something, and then not following it up with the "why" may feel odd, rude even. The charged space that word leaves behind is palpable. Learning to say "no" and letting it hang out there all alone in its glory is a small kind of superpower.

Of course, the receiving party will likely fire back with a "why?" when you offer up your polite decline. (Yes, the word "no" is polite.)

If this happens and you feel that stating "no is a complete sentence" is a bit harsh, try bundling up your courage with a little vulnerability. When pushed for a reason for some of my own uses of "no", I have honestly and unabashedly responded with declarations like: "I am incredibly tired and mentally unable to take on another commitment." Not only does this rarely, if ever, elicit a challenge, but my willingness to be raw and honest has, at times, inspired others to do the same or at the very least applaud my efforts.

Three Ways to Say No Without Using The Word "No"

If you feel rude or abrupt by simply stating "no," there is good news here. There are many alternative ways to say "no" without ever uttering the word.

- 1) One degree of departure from the word "no" would be saying "I can't."
- 2) Two degrees of departure would be saying, "I'll get back to you" and buying yourself enough time to give yourself a pep talk so that you can politely decline.
- 3) Three degrees of departure would be saying yes to something else by creating alternatives, kind of like a "reverse-Jedi mind trick." For example, someone recently asked me to purchase the refreshments for a large social justice organization gathering. I found myself hard-pressed to say "no" to this especially-pushy Executive Director, so I blurted out, "I can take care of the registration table that night!" By shifting the response from a negative one (something you can't or won't do) to something positive (something you can or are willing to do).

How to Create a Culture of Consent

Learning to say "no" is sort of like learning how to meditate—it's a habit that you have to cultivate. The more you say it, the easier it gets. The easier it gets, the less guilty you feel. We need to set up personal boundaries around what we are and aren't willing to accept for our own mental stability. And saying "no" doesn't just mean declining invitations or saying "no" to extra work.

Setting up boundaries means recognizing that other people have boundaries, too. It means asking for consent (another habit to cultivate!) before unloading your day on someone else or entering into a heavy conversation at that casual dinner reception. It's the kind thing to do and it sets the tone for others to follow. For example, I have a friend who is a fellow activist and I appreciate her dearly because she always asks me things like, "Hey, do you have the mental capacity for me to vent to you right now?" Or, "Are you okay with me asking your thoughts about the [fill in the blank news story] that happened the other day?"

Within the confines of your own boundaries, you can also feel free to draw a line in the sand if someone unleashes on you at a social gathering or a random meet-up by saying something like, "I am so grateful that you trust me with this story, however, I am at full mental capacity right now and I hope you can understand. Would you mind if we discussed something else tonight instead?" This approach actually trains individuals to ask you for consent in the future and helps them reclaim their own self-empowerment by giving them permission to do the same.

How to Say "No" To Yourself

Learning to say "no" isn't something you only need to do with other people, it's something you need to learn to say to yourself. (Chances are, you're the worst offender of all!) Saying "no" to yourself means creating personal boundaries that will ultimately contribute to your own well-being over the long-term. Here are some ways to say "no" to yourself:

* Saying "no" to that news app that sends you alerts multiple times a day

Continues on page 6.

Editorial Commentary

Editorial Commentary: Thank You to Our Volunteers



Cartoon By: Nasif Ahmed, Contributing Cartoonist. @NasifAhmed3

By: M.C. Reyes, Editor-in-Chief and Member of the Editorial Board.

As a lone new nonprofit founder, one of my biggest concerns was how I was going to manage running the charitable part of the nonprofit, while, at the same time, making sure the operational aspects of the organization were also taken care of.

The first couple of weeks, I tried doing everything by myself. Even though I was able to take care of all the things that needed to be taken care of, I quickly realized that if I wanted my organization to succeed, I needed to learn how to delegate some of the tasks. That's when I decided to look for volunteers who could help me not only complete all the projects I had created within the nonprofit, but who could also help me grow the organization.

One day, while doing some charitable work, I "stumbled" across a group of young ladies from Ridge Community High School (the Lady Bolts Girls Basketball team) who, like me, had a passion for community service, and after a quick meeting with their coaches, they agreed to be part of CHUF.

These young ladies have been a great addition to our organization and an instrumental part of the success we had in 2020. I can honestly say that, without these girls' support, many of our charitable events wouldn't have been able to be completed. Thanks to their commitment, dedication, and hard work, we were able to provide support to those in need in our community and had a successful year.

Today, I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all our volunteers and supporters, especially to these group of young ladies who worked hard in 2020 to help us achieve our goal of providing food and hygiene kits to our homeless population. Again, without their support, our mission wouldn't have been as successful as it was. I want them to know how much we appreciate them and how proud and happy I am to have all of them as part of our CHUF family.

And, to those of you who are considering volunteering for a nonprofit organization, I would say... go ahead and do it and I promise you that the experience of serving something bigger than yourself will be one of the best experiences you will ever have in your life.

And, always remember, your support will help someone's life to be better. Today, it may be them who need the support, but tomorrow it could be you.

So, go ahead and volunteer and, while you are at it, spread the word so others can also volunteer as well. As we always say... in a world where you could be anything, be kind... be compassionate because, at the end of the day, we are all in this together.

With Love, M.C. Reyes (CHUF's Founder / President)



Lady Bolts Girls Basketball team preparing hygiene kits for our homeless population.

Continuation from Page 5

"No" is a Complete Sentence

- * Saying "no" to checking the news multiple times an hour
- * Saying "no" to every single troll on your social media feed because you recognize that you are not going to change their minds and that you are simply depleting your own energy.
- * Saying "no" to checking your phone first thing in the morning.

See a theme here? Saying "no" to yourself often goes hand in hand with becoming aware of the times during your day when you're acting on automatic pilot—reacting instead of choosing!

We have to be willing to unclutter these things from our lives that sap our energy in the small moments, where we're not actively choosing to say "yes" and just allowing things into our lives. Creating new habits means understanding where you've become habituated—where you've lost touch with the moment.

When we take control of the ways we're "automatically" saying "yes" to things we might otherwise say "no" to, we give ourselves room to say "yes" to things that really matter.

So how do you learn to choose your yeses? Here's a quick practice to help you learn when to say "yes":

Take a breath to consider what you are saying "yes" to? Ask yourself, "Is my heart in this? Am I doing it for the right reasons (what is my motivator)? Can I let this go and make room for something that matters more?"

At some point, you just might realize that it's not always "something" that matters more. It's taking the time to acknowledge, "I matter, too."

In doing practicing to choose your yeses, we begin to filter out the things that matter least in exchange for the things that matter most. We begin to, in the words of Congresswoman Maxine Waters, "reclaim our time." The more time and space you create to accomplish the things that align with your individual goals and purposes, the better you're going to feel about being selfish with those yeses.

This article first appeared in <https://www.mindful.org/no-is-a-complete-sentence/>

We Want to Hear from you

As part of our commitment with our community,

The *Compassionate Hearts Gazette* would like to share your opinions and views with our readers. Submit your letters to the editor or opinion pieces to marielyscr@chufinc.org for a chance to have your submissions published in our newspaper.

THE SPOTLIGHT

with the Ambassador and the Chief

Featuring Ambassador Harry Thomas
and Chief Alex Morales



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My road from self-discovery
to emotional healing.

CLEANING OUT MY CLOSET

a collection of essays by
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A Memoir-In-Essays and Poems
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Compassionate Hearts UNITED Foundation P R E S E N T S

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