

Milk bag project buys mats

Children of third world countries will benefit from fundraiser

By Myriam Lublink

Six-year-old Michael Perry decided to start collecting milk bags in March 2012, to make sleeping mats for children in third world countries.

Perry's Sunday school teacher explained the milk bag project one Sunday morning and right away, Perry decided he wanted to become a part of it. His mother, Julie Thomas, had no idea how long Michael would actually continue collecting.

"I thought to myself, 'we'll collect some milk bags and a month from now, we'll be on to something else.' I had no idea that almost a year later, we'd still be collecting," his mother said.

Michael started collecting the milk bags they used at home and then asked local businesses if they could keep them for him so he could use them for the project.

"The word just sort of spread after that," explained his mother. "Schools started dropping them off and other people just started dropping them off."

Michael and his mother explained the process of making a sleeping mat at a presentation at Loyalist College on Tuesday night.

"First the banner has to be cut off the top to make the bag the right size. After slicing the bottom open, you have to cut 1.5-inch strips most of the way up, drape it over your arm and connect the slits by cutting diagonally. This process makes the milk bag into a 20-foot strip," explained his mother.

The beds are then made by crocheting the strips into a 41-inch by 60-inch sleeping mat. Michael said it takes 257 bags to make one mat. To date, he's collected 35,000 bags, enough to make almost 140 mats.

With so many milk bags collected, Perry and his mom cannot do the work themselves, so they've organized a group in Cobourg to help them out.

"We give the kids in Cobourg community service hours to sort the bags, cut them into strips and get them ready. Michael then has 14 ladies crocheting the mats for him."

Once the sleeping mats are crocheted, they are brought to Home Hardware who ships them to disaster relief victims around the world as well as to countries such as Haiti, Japan and Iraq.

Milk bags are chosen to make sleeping mats because they stop moisture from coming up from the ground. They also deter insects, snakes and provide insulation.

Michael is very proud of what he is doing and he knows he's doing it for a good reason.

"I just like shipping the beds to kids who don't have any," said Perry.



Photo by Myriam Lublink

Michael Perry started collecting milk bags in March 2012 to create sleeping mats for children in third world countries. With the help of his mother, Julie, he has collected 35,000 bags and he has no plans to stop working on the project. He says that he is happy to be able to send beds to kids that don't have one.

Worst of flu season behind us, says nurse

This winter season was longer and tougher than last year

By Laura Boudreau

The worst of the flu season in Quinte is over, said Lauren Deans, a nurse at the Loyalist College Health Centre in Belleville.

That's welcoming news for residents like Alison Cousins who recently had the flu.

"I have been sick before and never have I felt as bad as I did the past week," said Cousins, a second year paralegal student at Loyalist College. She was among a number of students of Loyalist who were down with the flu.

Students on campus at Loyalist dealt with the Quinte epidemic of the flu. The flu was really brutal this year lasting as long as a week and a half of being sick.

According to Deans, the flu epidemic is a lot larger and longer lasting than previous years in the Quinte area.

"If you don't have health issues you just get the shot and that's that. And for most people who have had the flu they will never miss another flu shot," said Deans.

There are tests called nasal swabs that doctors do world wide to see if all the strains of the flu are the same, said Deans

There is also a cold that is going around which people are saying is close to the flu but really is just an ongoing cold. You know that you have the flu if you are throwing up, achy and over all sick, said Deans.

"In spring time countries like India get the flu and travel to North America which is where the viruses are brought from. We send over doctors to create the vaccine from their sickness in order to be ready for our flu season in the fall," said Ron Paquin, a pharmacist at Shoppers Drug Mart in Kingston.

Some people do not believe in the flu shot because they believe that it is injecting a virus into your body, which is not the case, said Deans.

"It is important for people who are working or coming into contact with people who have compromised immunities like the elderly and babies it's a good idea to make sure that you have that," said Deans.

"People who have a weaker immunity are more prone to the flu, which makes it (the flu shot) mandatory if you work with small children or in an elderly home," said Deans.

School may get a new connection to the city with a proposed bridge

By Laura Boudreau

A bridge and hiking path has been proposed at the Loyalist College campus, which will connect the school to town.

Joe Callahan, a journalism professor at Loyalist, is the head of the project. He is on the sustainability committee at the college and is looking after the project.

"Students biking down Wallbridge-Loyalist Rd., the Moira street extension or

Dundas Street is just not safe, so we came up with the idea three years ago about a bridge/hiking path," said Callahan.

Along with the environmental and safety bonuses that come with building a trail, there are also some worries from students including littering and safety around construction.

"I've seen it personally on new res - the destruction of property. I've seen broken windows, the trees being snapped, just

kids being kids... being disrespectful," said Katherine Glass, a second year bachelor of science in nursing student.

"Something I fear about the construction of the bridge, it could have lots of broken bottles around it and graffiti on it," said Glass.

The city of Belleville, the conservation area and the board of directors are supportive of the idea according to Callahan. Overall it seems like an ideal project to

students as well.

"It will be safety for people if they go to the club because it's a lot safer than them walking on the side of the road," said Emmanuel Appiahkubi, a first year media experience student.

"I think a bike trail is exactly what students need. When weather is nice it will allow us to walk to town and avoid the traffic," said Morgan Davy, a second year student in journalism: online, print and broadcast.

Plans have started to shape up, begin-

ning with the cost estimates. Callahan said he has been discussing this project with the city of Belleville, the conservation area and The board of directors for the school.

"The estimated cost for the construction alone of the bridge is \$49,000 and the second one is \$55,000. There are two because it is just two styles of bridges," said Callahan.

"It would make for a greener school, which

Discovering answers to life's difficult questions

By Gail Paquette

Familiar words spoken by many when faced with dilemmas in life are, "There has to be a better way." According to Pat Kammer, author of Love's Voice Changes You, this is when you are ready to accept changing your way of thinking.

Kammer has discovered answers to life's hard to answer questions and wants to share them with the world.

"I want my book to go international," said Kammer. "I feel very brave in this because I am a vessel. It's not about me, it's about the love that people need for themselves and for the world."

A 77-year-old Belleville author, Kammer has been on a spiritual journey her entire life, beginning at an early age with fundamental religion.

"Religion was all there was back then," she says. "We didn't have a choice. Now there is a new way of thinking but 98 per cent of the population doesn't know about it."

Twenty-five years ago, Kammer discovered A Course in Miracles, a series of three books penned by Helen Schucman, professor of medical psychology at Columbia University.

This began her own journey of seeking answers and receiving them through her inner voice she calls, Spirit.

"The journey to happiness is not based upon religion," said Kammer. "It is about the true belief that we are all a perfect seed. We all have that inner core wanting the best for everyone."

"Until we fix ourselves and love ourselves, faults and all we can never be truly happy."

In chapters entitled Stuck and Discouraged, Change Your Thoughts and Feeling Unworthy?, Kammer asks for the understanding of life's universal quandaries she too has experienced.



Photo by Gail Paquette

Seventy-seven-year-old Pat Kammer published her first book Love's Voice Changes You in 2012. It is the result of three years of writing and a life long spiritual journey. People have expressed that Kammer's writings have had a profound impact on their lives. She is currently in the middle of writing her second book.

"People are always looking on the outside for answers, they think I am just not lucky; there is something wrong with me. If it wasn't for the government, taxes, their job, the people in their life," said Kammer.

She often finds a lot of people get upset

when it is suggested that they are responsible for their own reality.

"The thing is, I have learned I am in control of my own destiny, I am in control of my life. All these years I was living in fear. I had been forever in a day trying

to be a good girl. I didn't know what was right or wrong," she said.

In 2009, when Kammer began receiving answers, she immediately started sharing them with the world. She accumulated a following online. The "patters"

that she posted every day were being read and were making a difference in the lives of many.

Kammer said, "patters," are light hearted messages meant to give positive answers for life's difficulties.

Meanwhile, she was becoming the caregiver of her ailing husband, a man she describes as the "rock" in her life.

In May, 2012 her husband, Charlie died. Shortly after that she self-published her first book.

Kammer upholds that everything happens for a reason and people come into your life for a purpose. She says asking for help is often hidden behind our need to seek control in a world that genderizes, discriminates and tells us how we should or shouldn't be.

Kammer's favourite saying is, 'I won't should on you if you don't should on me.'

"We have been brainwashed," said Kammer. "People think others should be a certain way."

"When life doesn't seem to be working and you are not getting the answers out there, turn inward. When you don't trust the outside go inside. When you give up searching out there for answers is when God can do something. We are so controlling, we think we can fix everything."

The simple answer is to ask for what you want and then say, "I leave it in your hands." The answers will come, she ensures.

Kammer is well aware that several books have been published with similar material.

"Like trillions of snowflakes, each of us is unique in our understanding and each in need of the right and understandable voice that finally reaches us with the message of love that has been waiting for us."

Kammer's book, Love's Voice Changes You, is available at Balboapress.com, Amazon.ca and her website www.loves-voicechangesyou.com.