

THE H PPENING

An Annual Easter Publication - "The Village Years"
By Todd Osterei, E.B.



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Dear Kessie's,

I have been so busy this winter, I wasn't sure I was going to be able to write a letter. So many children that I deliver to eagerly wait to read my letters, but this year I may have to cut back. "Why" you ask? I have 26 daughters getting married in a few months, and 159 grandbabies, 628 great grandbabies, and 1194 great-great grandbabies being born. It's really hard to find the extra time to sit down and remember what happened in The Village, and inform everyone what we do here, how we help each other grow and how we spend our free time. I enjoy it very much, but Sadie tells me that I need to slow down.

Last week we awoke to a beautiful spring day and the kids all wanted to go to The Village to sample candy, look around and play tag in the park. We don't get a lot of snow here, but the air was a little chilly and you could see frost on the grass where the shadow of the houses had blocked the sun from melting it. The sky was clear blue and we just knew today would be our first warm day of the season. So we gathered all 123 kids and the Mrs. and I headed East for the day. It's exhausting for me, because no doubt they will all fall asleep before we get home and I have to carry them all inside to their beds. I've decided to take my EarPad with me today, so maybe I will write your letter while I let the grass-rats burn off some energy.

As we relaxed and listened to the sounds of birds chirping and felt the warmth of the sun, as it rose over the Candyland Factory, I thought of you all. Crazy huh? I'm constantly counting over a hundred heads, as they all go off in different directions, and my mind wonders to your family! I find myself caught up in moments that I knew I would never forget. We've all probably felt like this a few times, where our hearts were stirred by emotion, and we just knew, that what was happening, is a moment in time that will etch our minds forever. You kids have done that to me. Since I took over my position 84 years ago, I have never met a family that changed the course here in the Village as much as the Kessie's and their extended families have.

I remembered the time I walked down these streets to find it empty, while everyone was inside the break room praying over Canaan after her accident. I remember the day Titus walked confidently into the factory and pulled his someday brother to safety along with a little girl that he will meet again someday. I laughed at the memory of Boone attaching a string to Ayden's loose tooth and the other end to a weed eater. The twins taught their dog to sit with 5 M&M's on her nose right here in front of City Hall. (*I think their record was 8 for 5 minutes.*) Gunner, with his curly red hair, would launch water balloons over the construction zone getting him into a little trouble. He had quite an arm on him. Amanda was so compassionate and never passed up an opportunity to comfort somebody that was sad even taking her lunch tray across the cafeteria to sit with them so they were not alone. I remember drying Liam's tears when his Aunt Hannah left the nursery for the last time, and everybody remembers, because it's roped off at the Depot, Josiah's name scratched in his desk top from high school, previously used by Becca for her lab class in Physiology. She was older than him and she never thought someday they would be married. I knew... whom do you think had the desk moved to study hall? Moriah left the Village when she was 15 to work in the mission fields, mainly serving in the Philippines. Through the years she had grown close to a young man, four years her junior and they liked each other a lot. He loved sports, but his first love was definitely God! When he was a senior playing quarterback during the Homecoming game, Village High was losing to Valley Academy 67-21. It was a tough night for him, but during half-time Moriah passed out papers to everyone in the stands on the home side. After kickoff they held up the papers and it simply read "Philippians 4:13". It was amazing the turn around in the second half. Chelsea was Homecoming Queen that year and asked that the scripture be hung from a banner in our Gymnasium. It's still there today.

I can't walk these streets without seeing their faces, hearing their laughter, and feeling their love. When your Popi was here, he helped us write the curriculum that taught people where their strengths were and how to best direct their lives. This Village didn't even exist before then. He petitioned the Board to increase the age to 20 years old and allow intense training of their giftings. By the time they leave, at one day old, they are better equipped to be who God designed them to be. We just celebrated our 75th Anniversary. I believe your family is a prime example of the success of this program.

Well, I can see that 15 of my kids have chocolate around their lips, so I better go wash them before Sadie gets back from "*Hares to You*" and asks me what I have been doing all day? Happy Easter! Remember it's the resurrection of Jesus that we celebrate today.

Todd