**On Calming the Storm**

**Delta Kappa Gamma State Meeting: 01-09-2021**

This past week has been extremely stressful for so many. Coming off of a year of Covid, civil unrest, unparalleled forest fires, a record hurricane season, a chaotic presidential election, and then a resurgence of the virus, many were looking forward to a much smoother and more hopeful New Year.

We started with the hope of a vaccine to bring Covid under control and the hope of finally getting our lives somewhat back to normal. Then January 6th and the attack on the Capitol Building in Washington, DC sent shock waves through our nation and around the world.

I was, as I am sure you were, dumbfounded, angry, confused that this could happen, sickened and disheartened over the disrespect and violence that occurred so quickly. Most of all I was saddened that this could happen in our country.

I can understand that we all may not agree; especially when it comes to politics and religion, but to see the degree of intolerance that reared its ugly head that day was frightening. As educators, counselors and administrators we learn and teach tolerance. We try to encourage our students to work through their issues, to avoid bullies or bullying and that harassment and intimidation are not acceptable options.

It would easy to get caught up and lost in the anger, the confusion and to believe that perhaps 2021 will be as trying as 2020. It would be easy to shake our heads and wonder if we could take another year of this. So, I did a little “googling” and you know what? It wasn’t a week of all doom and gloom.

One little 5 year old boy rang in the New Year by ending 60 weeks of chemotherapy and could start the year fresh.

Another little 5 year old girl used the money from her piggy bank to buy a cake for a local nursing home and created hand drawn New Year’s cards for the residents.

An oncologist erased $650,000.00 in debt for his patients, so they wouldn’t have to face those bills as they entered the New Year.

Another little girl in Kansas released a balloon of good wishes and it was found by a stranger in Louisiana.

A young boy, 10 years old, was adopted by the man who had been raising him, his wish come true.

I know there are even more good things than this. So the message and the challenge is this:

There will always be terrible things that happen in our country, our world and our lives. These things can hit us hard and we may find ourselves feeling down and distressed.

Remember, there are good things, loving things and heroic things that are happening out there as well. If you have ever, or never, made a New Year resolution I encourage you to make one now:

Make a resolution to be the smile, the hope and the voice of reason. Make the resolution to calm the storm and spread the joy. Make the resolution to remind those around you that there is strength in love and caring and hope…oh that’s right…make the resolution to be yourself, because you are the smile, the hope, the love, the voice of reason, the spreader of joy and calm…you are educators.

Catherine Schofield (State Motivational Speaker 2019-2021)