

Editorial

Giving thanks to those in need

CNN Heroes celebration shows impact humanity has on its fellow man, emphasizing the ways in which people are compelled to give

Wisps of steam waft up from the browned, shiny skin of turkeys around the country, set upon various tablecloths in homes situated in both rural and urban settings. Mashed potatoes, whipped and buttered, are ladled atop plates by the dollop. Glasses are swung through the air and clink together when met. Cheers and laughter fill warm rooms and temporarily, most people forget about the troubles of their world.

While the norms of privileged society encourage celebrating in this fashion, not everyone gives thanks this way.

Many forget about the foundations of Thanksgiving, many of which are rooted in the word itself. The celebrations that surround the third Thursday of November are not always met with extravagant displays of food, close-knit family members or even homes in which to host gatherings. Many are aware that the smiling faces of those in commercials do little to truly describe their own personal stories. Some cannot look past the starving in their communities, or the poor

without access to healthcare. Some realize those needs do not cease to exist with the arrival of the holiday season.

But even those who have less have more this season. One need only look to those who have done the incredible with the most meager of resources. The smooth taste of sweet potato pie is not all we have to be grateful for this season, nor any. We have much, much more to be grateful for.

The top-10 CNN heroes of the year of 2010 were announced Nov. 23. Every year, Anderson Cooper scours each continent, looking for people who do extraordinary things for others while living common, everyday lives. Many of their deeds go undetected. They do thankless work in the eyes of the international public. Many cite the most rewarding part of their jobs as the people whose lives they touch, who wouldn't be able to care for themselves without the services they provide.

According to Jim Walton, president of CNN Worldwide, "CNN Heroes has illustrated the best of humanity through the telling

of stories of selfless acts of kindness, courage and perseverance."

CNN.com cites the CNN Heroes campaign as a program "which salutes everyday people whose extraordinary accomplishments are making a difference in their communities and beyond."

To name just a few of the heroes honored at the ceremony:

Seventy-four year old Guadalupe Arizpe De La Vega is the founder of a hospital in Juarez, Mexico that cares for approximately 900 people daily, despite some patients' inability to pay. Violence in the city makes it hard for her to travel, but she continually travels there to make sure that people receive the attention they need.

Anduradha Koirala and her group named Maiti Nepal has rescued and rehabilitated more than 12 thousand victims of women and girls exploited in the sex trade in Nepal.

A state struggling with issues of obesity, Mississippi is getting much needed assistance in the way of nutritional guidance and

weight loss. Linda Fondren has implemented free fitness activities and nutrition classes in her hometown - and as a result, its residents have benefitted from thousands of pounds in weight loss.

Thousands of miles away in India, Narayanan Krishnan brings hot meals to India's destitute population every single day of the year. As founder of the non-profit organization titled Akshaya Trust, he has served upwards of 1.2 million meals since 2002.

And in Texas, Dan Wallrath has given injured Afghanistan and Iraq veterans mortgage-free homes.

Also at the show this year, the Chilean miners gathered on stage, standing close to one another while expressing pride in their country. After stories were shared, and performances completed, cameras documented the multiple times the audience was brought to tears.

If for no other reason, this is why we gather. Holding hands, bowing heads, murmuring words of gratefulness, we all perform small gestures of thanks.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Thank you to the entire Elon Community:

I want to thank all of you at Elon - from President Lambert and his wife, all of the faculty and students, along with anyone who may have had the opportunity to have met my beautiful daughter Michelle Pflieger.

I write this with a very grieving soul, as it has been two months without my daughter Michelle - your friend, your student, your classmate.

Many of you had the pleasure of her spirit thoroughly embrace you or you may have only had a brief encounter with her. Whatever she shared with you will be with you forever.

It was very healing to come down in early October to be given the opportunity to meet, see and feel the true energy of Elon. Thank you for all that you showed us and shared with us, especially Michelle's Elon 101 class and Troy Martin.

Thank you for all of prayers and cards and especially for raising the funds to get her horse Velvet home safely.

Life is forever altered without her. So you can do what she would want.

Smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

With heartfelt thanks,
Joan Cummins (mother of Michelle Pflieger) and family



A young tree was planted outside of McMichael in memorium of Michelle Pflieger. PHOTO SUBMITTED

TO COMMENT ...

We appreciate original responses to Pendulum articles. Feedback of 500 words or less can be sent in several ways.

Letters to the editor and columns can be e-mailed to pendulum@elon.edu or sent to 7012 Campus Box, Elon, N.C. 27244. Content will be edited for clarity, length and accuracy. All submissions must include a name and phone number.

A message board also accompanies each article online at www.elon.edu/pendulum where commentary can be quickly posted.



SARAH BETH COSTELLO | Cartoonist

THE PENDULUM

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The Pendulum is published each Wednesday of the academic year. The advertising and editorial copy deadline is 5 p.m. the Friday before publication. Letters to the editor and guest columns are welcome and should be typed and e-mailed with a telephone number for verification. Submissions are accepted as Word documents. The Pendulum reserves the right to edit obscene and potentially libelous material. Lengthy letters or columns may be trimmed to fit. All submissions become the property of The Pendulum and will not be returned. You can reach The Pendulum by e-mail at pendulum@elon.edu. If you have questions or concerns about an article, contact a section editor. Please do not respond to reporters directly.

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