

A Service Army - RU474L

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Journalist Cokie Roberts declares in her speech about servant leaders, “I’ve spent a lifetime trying to be of service, but it’s not easy” (World Leader’s Conference). Service requires sacrifice and those who serve the most find a way to cope with these sacrifices and intertwine service into their jobs. A nurse must deal with death on a regular basis; a policeman goes out on a call wearing a bulletproof vest; a teacher strives to educate students even if it means little pay. These citizens are my relatives and inspire me to enter their community of service. As Americans, we must cultivate a culture that inspires citizens to serve and maintain that culture because only then can our nation thrive.

Physical health is key to a productive nation; doctors and nurses are crucial. Many times, health care workers must make sacrifices to keep their patients healthy and my aunt is no exception. Bess Murphy, a nurse, faces emotional strain while trying to keep her patients comfortable. One instance involved a 21-year-old boy who died of lymphoma. The death of such a young boy struck Bess hard and she stayed with the boy’s family from the hospital to the grave. However, she is strong and describes the motivation for her work, saying, “helping someone come to terms with their death, helping ensure that they were comfortable, and being present for their families meant that I was helping to shape the legacy of how those families would remember that experience moving forward, and that was an awesome and wonderful responsibility.” These stressful and emotional experiences leave their mark on health care workers and Bess says about her patients, “I still see their faces and think of them even now.” She chooses a life of service to ensure a healthy community.

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A police officer, helping create a safe environment for all citizens, faces clear and immediate danger on any day. From street officer, to SWAT team member, to Lieutenant, for years my uncle Timothy Murphy has put his life on the line. He is adamant about his reasoning, saying, "I just always felt that as members of American society, we all have the duty to provide some level of service to our community." Similar to Admiral Daniel J. Callaghan, my uncle, while protecting others, has made choices that some may consider "suicide". One night a man threatened to kill his own family and was hiding in a basement. Knowing the suspect had a gun, Tim, with his partner, still entered the pitch black room and captured the man, but not before a bullet grazed his head. My uncle's passionate life of service, both as a policeman and earlier in the Army, makes me proud to be his nephew. Tim and all the other heroic safety officers in our communities provide the safety a nation requires.

No country advances without an educated populace. My aunt Catherine Murphy teaches long hours, many without pay, but takes solace in the fact that educated young people lead to an educated nation. She teaches college students, and they are the upcoming leaders and workers for our nation. It is necessary that they leave her Jesuit college ready to set the world on fire. Other dedicated teachers, who work throughout the day and night so that their students receive the best education possible, surround me at Saint Ignatius. Teachers commit their lives to improving our country. They educate the rest of us about living lives of service.

While not every form of service involves risking the ultimate sacrifice of one's life, all require compromise. Cokie Roberts continues her speech by explaining that one

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must “incorporate principles of service into the workplace,” and that is exactly what my relatives have done for all of their adult lives. They make sacrifices every day because for them, service has become a mission. They inspire me to do my part as well. My uncle, Tim, observes, “because so many choose *not* to contribute, those who do contribute have to do even more.”

Following his example, I have taken on various volunteer efforts to do my part. Some are distant, like protecting endangered sea turtles off the coast of Georgia every summer. I have learned that while I am only one person, my work counting nests and tagging turtles every night in the pouring rain and lightning does make a difference. Scientific records show that the number of nesting turtles has been increasing on the very beach where I work. Closer to home, I volunteer to rescue lost and injured hikers in California on a search and rescue team. I have found hypothermic hikers in the Sierra Mountains of California and provided comfort for loved ones with lost family members. I am continually amazed at the difference I can make at my young age and these experiences reinforce my passion to serve like those in the community around me.

Through volunteering and experiencing the real emotions that come from such work, I can only imagine what it is like to live service everyday. My relatives and many others do just that, strengthening the community of service our nation needs. Provided this community stays strong, our nation will continue to progress as service becomes a more integral part of the workplace. I plan to follow in Admiral Daniel J. Callaghan’s footsteps and in my relatives’ footsteps. I plan to be a part of this service army.

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- Cokie Roberts, video courtesy of Harry Walker Agency, from 2010 Yakima Town Hall Speakers Series (World Leader's Conference).
- Bess Murphy, comments dated March 20th, 2013.
- Timothy Murphy, comments dated March 18th, 2013.
- Catherine Murphy, miscellaneous comments in 2012-2013.