



Reaching Out

BONNIE HUMKE CONNECTS WITH OTHERS DURING A DIFFICULT TIME

BY MEGHANN WINCHELL

Bonnie Humke of Dundas, Minnesota, has taken time during the Covid-19 pandemic to sit and think about what she can do to make a difference in the lives of others, especially those who may need an additional boost or bit of encouragement.

"We need to remember that we are not alone, but united as a global family in good times and bad," Bonnie said. "Regardless of economic status, age, race, religion, culture, ethnicity, gender identity, occupation or geographic borders, the virus has impacted us all. For twenty-five years I was the administrator for the Budapest Semesters in Mathematics program, which selects and sends talented mathematics

students from colleges and universities throughout North America to study advanced courses in Budapest, Hungary. After I retired from the program, both my husband, Paul, and I decided we wanted to give back to the communities that have given us so much over the years." Paul is a professor of math at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, and Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia.

An idea soon formed in Bonnie's mind. She used her talents and resources to contribute to the world when most needed. "Since I am an artist and photographer, I tried to think of some way to incorporate my artwork in a holistic way. In my late teens I received

a diagnosis of a rare and life-threatening disease. To this day, I remember vividly how alone and frightened I felt. Because of that experience, I came up the idea of an online e-greeting card company. No one should feel emotionally isolated or alone. My cards make it easier to send encouraging words from the comfort of one's own home."

Her concept was not a new one. She began the business in 2014. "I created a website featuring e-greetings of comfort and caring. All proceeds went to local, national and global charities. Now that we are in the middle of a public health crisis, I offer my cards for free. There is no hidden agenda, no strings attached.

Since Covid-19 is dragging on, I think a lot of us want to do something but do not know what. Maybe we're thinking too broadly or in too grand of a scale. There is a quote I like that says, 'The smallest good deed is better than the grandest good intention.' And that is where my website, KomfortKardz.com, can help. Each photo and drawing is my original work. My hope is that they tell a story of inclusion and hopefulness, giving others a voice and allowing them to express their own stories.

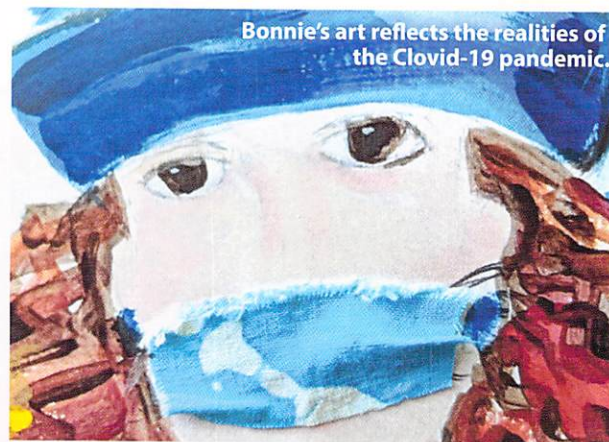
"As each of us grapples with the pandemic, we can choose to look beyond ourselves to our global connectedness, to look for a need and try to fill it, even something as simple as sending a note. When uniting with kindness, we create a powerful force which helps those struggling focus on hope and better days ahead. As a worldwide family, we take care of each other in good times and bad."

Offering her cards at no cost is


something Bonnie has decided to continue long after the pandemic ends. One can be sent anywhere in the world, in any language.

"My cards allow a person to connect with others while the need is critical. When this happens, the world becomes a more connected, more thoughtful, more considerate and kinder environment. I've even created some Covid-19 cards showing people wearing masks, with a verse that reads 'Our Tasks? Wear Masks!'"

Temporarily we can no longer give hugs, handshakes or gather around round the table. Bonnie's cards create virtual families and friends. "The simple act of sending uplifting messages could be the lifeline someone needs to make it through another day. Sometimes it feels awkward or intrusive to speak face-to-face or over the phone. KomfortKardz lets you reach



out instantly at any time across emotional, personal and geographic boundaries."

Listening to Bonnie's positive perspective is inspiring. Not only does she hope this will encourage more cards to be sent, but it may possibly encourage others to find a special way of making this world a brighter and better place. "Perhaps a simple gesture of kindness will make it easier for that person to survive another day." 

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