

We Need Each Other

by Kenita Gibbins

I believe I fell in love with my husband's great smile before knowing I loved his whole being. All of my jobs and volunteer work would not have been successful without smiles.

St. Lucia is a small island off the coast of Venezuela. The village where I taught exists because the cruise ships let off visitors to shop. My last Global Volunteer job in St. Lucia with six- and seven-year-old children, helping them with their reading skills, became successful because I never frowned. I beamed with them during their lessons. Frowns will never work for a teacher. I would teach each child for 10 minutes. It doesn't sound very long, but it works for never losing attention. I tried a trick with one boy. We read the same book every day. This student was taller than the other children and had fewer words. He finally asked, "Can we read another book?" I said to him, "But you just read this book to me. You couldn't do that when we started." He left the room with pride. I felt like jumping with joy.

The students of St. Lucia, who had no learning problems, had mothers or older siblings who read to them at home. Other mothers gave lots of love and picked up their children every day from school, but they hadn't the opportunity for an education when they were young.

Oh, I almost forgot to mention my babies radiated as the cutest little kids ever! They hugged with enthusiasm.

No one ever wants to be friends with a grump. Smiles have no borders. Grins don't know the difference between people of different colors. Beams work with people who don't know more than one language. Our day shines when we receive an ear-to-ear reward.

Over the years, I had jobs as a receptionist, usually for doctors. Can you imagine a sick person hearing, "Have a seat, you are in for a wait"?

I worked at the Jewish Community Center for 15 years, leading exercise classes. I always used music with an energetic rhythm. While I was at the JCC, I did some water aerobics classes. I still giggle when I think about a senior citizen who stepped off into deep water. She declared she was a hero even though I pulled her back to safety.

I wouldn't have lasted 18 years as a docent at the Denver Art Museum without loving to be with people.

Since I landed in the hospital for three days, our friends have come to our rescue more than once. The song about people who have people are the luckiest in the world had a writer with wisdom. He must have had lots of smiles.