

# CELEBRATING NATIONAL TEACHER WEEK

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*Real Life Heroes*

## Teachers as Heroes

An essay written by an assistant principal in Ohio.

By J. Bradley:

"Where are the heroes of today?" a radio talk show host thundered. He blames society's shortcomings on education. Too many people are looking for heroes in all the wrong places. Movie stars and rock musicians, athletes, and models aren't heroes; they're celebrities.

Heroes abound in public schools, a fact that doesn't make the news. There is no precedent for the level of violence, drugs, broken homes, child abuse, and crime in today's America . Education didn't create these problems, but deals with them every day.

You want heroes?

Consider Dave Sanders, the school teacher shot to death while trying to shield his students from two youths on a shooting rampage at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. Sanders gave his life, along with 12 students, and other less heralded heroes survived the Colorado blood bath.

**You want heroes?**

**Jane Smith, a Fayetteville, NC teacher, was moved by the plight of one of her students - a boy dying for want of a kidney transplant. So this woman told the family of a 14-year-old boy that she would give him one of her kidneys. And she did. When they appeared together hugging on the Today Show, Katie Couric was near tears.**

**You want heroes?**

**Doris Dillon dreamed all her life of being a teacher. She not only made it, she was one of those wondrous teachers who could bring the best out of every single child. One of her fellow teachers in San Jose, CA said, "She could teach a rock to read."**

**Suddenly she was stricken with Lou Gehrig's Disease which is always fatal, usually within five years. She asked to stay on job ... and did. When her voice was affected, she communicated by computer.**

**Did she go home? Absolutely not! She is running two elementary school libraries! When the disease was diagnosed, she wrote the staff and all the families that she had one last lesson to teach .... that dying is part of living. Her colleagues named her Teacher of the Year.**

**You want heroes?**

**Bob House, a teacher in Georgia, tried out for "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?". After he won the million dollars, a network film crew wanted to follow up to see how it had impacted his life. New cars? Big new house?**

Instead, they found both Bob House and his wife still teaching. They explained that it was what they had always wanted to do with their lives and that would not change. The community was both stunned and grateful.

**You want heroes?**

Last year the average school teacher spent \$468 of their own money for student necessities ... workbooks, pencils .. supplies kids had to have but could not afford. That's a lot of money from the pockets of the most poorly paid teachers in the industrial world.

Schools don't teach values? The critics are dead wrong. Public education provides more Sunday School teachers than any other profession.

The average teacher works more hours in nine months than the average 40-hour employee does in a year.

**You want heroes?**

For millions of kids, the hug they get from a teacher is the only hug they will get that day because the nation is living through the worst parenting in history.

An Argyle, Texas kindergarten teacher hugs her little 5 and 6 year-olds so much that both the boys and the girls run up and hug her when they see her in the hall, at the football games, or in the malls years later.

**A Michigan principal moved me to tears with the story of her attempt to rescue a badly abused little boy who doted on a stuffed animal on her desk .. one that said "I love you!" He said he'd never been told that at home. This is a constant in today's society .. two million unwanted, unloved, abused children in the public schools, the only institution that takes them all in.**

**You want heroes?**

**Visit any special education class and watch the miracle of personal interaction, a job so difficult that fellow teachers are awed by the dedication they witness. There is a sentence from an unnamed source which says: "We have been so eager to give our children what we didn't have that we have neglected to give them what we did have."**

**What is it that our kids really need? What do they really want?**

**Math, science, history, and social studies are important, but children need love, confidence, encouragement, someone to talk to, someone to listen, standards to live by. Teachers provide upright examples, the faith and assurance of responsible people.**

**You want heroes?**

**Then go down to your local school and see our real live heroes - the ones changing lives for the better each and every day!**