



Cape Cod Community Angels: Teaching Compassion through Community Service



by Claudia Robinson

On television, Charlie may have had three infamous angels, but Jodie Pear has ten. And while gun-slinging and chasing bad guys may not be the order of their day, they do change lives and help those in need.

The story began three years ago, when Jodie was at the pinnacle of her career as Marketing Director for Epoch Senior Living. Motivated and selfless, Jodie found a deep satisfaction in her work.

A mother of three, Jodie didn't pay much attention to the sudden recurring muscle aches and exhaustion she began to experience. Instead, she pushed herself harder.

"Even as a child, Jodie was go-go-go," explains Bev Hall, Jodie's mother. "I would come home and she'd have her bedroom re-arranged. Once she decided she didn't like the bathroom wallpaper, so she stripped and painted it!"

It wasn't until she began slurring her words and losing her balance that Jodie resigned herself to the fact something was very wrong.

"The symptoms screamed MS," Jodie recalls, eyes misting with tears, "but the tests kept coming back negative. They gave me medication but that just exacerbated the symptoms. It was like I was drunk all the time."

Despite multiple visits to various hospitals and second, third and fourth opinions, Jodie's symptoms progressed, affecting her job performance. "Eventually my boss pulled me aside and said, 'Look, Jodie, you need to take care of your health, you need to go home.' You have no idea how devastating that one sentence was."

"I needed to reclaim my self-worth, and I had to find my value." She glances over her shoulder at her mother. "Giving back to the Community, helping those in need, taking care of others, it's in my blood. She (my mother) taught me to be that way."

Apparently the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. One morning, Jodie's older son Nick required a set of fasting blood tests, only to find a waiting room full of hungry and cranky people ahead of them. Jodie envisioned a worst-case scenario. "He was hungry too, and he complained. What hungry teenage boy wouldn't?"

Another mother arrived with a diabetic daughter. Seeing the long wait, she panicked and desperately tried to estimate their waiting time, calculating how long before the fasting became dangerous for the girl. The overburdened receptionist simply told them to take a number and sit down.

Nick rose, approached the mother and handed her his ticket. "I'm next, take mine," he offered. "The mother was so grateful," said Jodie, "and I was just so proud of my son."

Jodie suddenly had an idea. "I realized that, disability or not, I still had the ability to teach others how to give back. How to care."

Jodie turned her dream of helping others into reality, creating the Cape Cod Community Angels, a group for young girls in grades 2-5. The group's main objective is to serve their community by volunteering time and raising money for worthy causes.

Initially terrified of the toll the undertaking might have on his wife's health, her husband Jeff now sees how much this group means to Jodie and how happy it has made her. He stands by her, helping out whenever possible.

The Angels came together immediately. "It started off with a few girls, friends of my daughters. They had so much fun they began sharing what they were doing with other friends. Next thing I know, in less than a month, I had 10 girls!"

Jodie's enthusiasm is apparent. Her face lights up and she can't say enough about the girls or their parents, who have been her staunchest supporters. "Jenn Williams and Laurie Hulton are a GODSEND!" she gushes about two particular parents. "Jenn handles all our secretarial work and Laurie is our activities coordinator and will eventually take on the responsibility of co-leader. I'd be lost without them."



Jodi Pear, President & Founder of the Cape Cod Community Angels Photograph by Claudia Robinson

Currently the girls meet at the Pear's home one night a week, but due to the increased number of girls eager to join, it became apparent a bigger venue would be necessary. "I am happy to announce that as of January 7th, the Yarmouth Senior Center has graciously donated their space to our group on Fridays from 4:00-5:30! We want more girls, and this is the way we can do it!"

The space, more than triple the size of the current location, also boasts a kitchen. "As a non-profit, obviously, the funds are limited. We do fundraisers, sell crafts, bake sales, anything we can to raise money. So having a kitchen is just fantastic!" Jodie explains.

Laughing, Jodie adds, "Donations, however, are ALWAYS welcome!"

Last month, the Angels helped Cape Cod Cares for the Troops. They packed boxes of supplies, including personalized letters of thanks and well wishes from the girls in each and every one. They helped load the boxes onto the truck and participated in a group video being sent along with the boxes, expressing their gratitude for services rendered.



Angel Members work on holiday cards for Cape Cod Cares for the Troops. Photograph by Jodie Pear

"They came away with this huge sense of accomplishment and pride. On the ride home I asked them how they felt, I needed to know if they 'got it.'" Apparently they did. A resounding "We feel GREAT!" was the reply.

You can't help but feel Jodie's genuine affection for these young ladies when she speaks; it's palpable. "That's all this is about. It's about teaching them to be grateful for the things they have, no matter how big or small, and not focusing on the have-nots.

"It's about these girls walking away from these experiences feeling good about themselves, and broadening their view of the world. So many children live in this bubble, they have no idea how much suffering is going on right here in their own community."

Going forward, the Angels have plans to assist Community Action Committee with Toys for Tots and participating in the Adopt-A-Grandparent program. They are hoping that with time, name recognition and reputation will result in many more volunteer opportunities.

ANGELS' PROMISE

I will do my best to always be honest and fair, always friendly and helpful, and most of all, considerate to my other Angels and those within my community. I promise to respect myself and others and I will volunteer my time to help my community while working as a team with my other Angels.

Jodie sees a future for the Angels, a nationwide campaign, "We just want to be out there, doing whatever we can for whoever we can. Call us, and if it's within our capabilities, we'll be there!"

As the interview draws to a close, I ask Jodie one final question. Because of my poor phrasing, it comes off more personal than I'd planned. "Fill in the blanks," I said, "My dream is..."

Jodie doesn't hesitate. The tears come unbidden and hot as she sobs her reply. "My dream is to get my health back for the sake of my family."

Even in this desire for health, something most of us take for granted, it is not for her sake that she is dreaming this, but for others. I suddenly realize that the Angels could not have a better mentor or role model, than they do in Jodie.

With every breath she takes, and every choice she makes, it is with the best interest of the rest of the world that she does so. If at the end of the day, each and every Cape Cod Community Angel takes home that lesson, one can't help but have great hope for our Community's future.

If you would like join our great group, have questions or have any opportunities that our Angels can volunteer for please call:

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email CapeCodCommunityAngels@comcast.net

Check out Jodie's [Facebook Page](#)

**WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR WAYS TO
HELP OUT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY!**

To read more about the Cape Cod Community Angels, and to see additional photographs of the Angels at work in their communities, click on the angel wings:



Claudia Robinson lives on Cape Cod with her husband and two children.

She entertains her passion for reading in between being a full-time Mom, aspiring writer and avid photographer. You can view some of her work at: www.dflyphotography.blogspot.com

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