

Educators and support staff going beyond heroism

Educators, support staff going beyond heroism

By: [Shelley Cook](#), WFP

Posted: 11/10/2020 3:00 AM

JOHN WOODS / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS FILES Despite the procedures and protocols kids have found some stability and normalcy in going to school.

OPINION

Every day my kids get up, they get ready and they go to school. It's the one thing that has returned to normal in their lives during this pandemic, and it's the one thing that all three of them have told me that they're most grateful for right now.

Obviously, going to school looks and feels different than it used to, but inside the locked-down walls and beyond the procedures and protocols, my kids — and probably so many other kids — have found a little bit of stability and normalcy and a whole lot of comfort in their lives.

I was so hesitant to send my kids back to school. I mean, I am still worried about them catching COVID and getting sick, or not getting sick but spreading it to us. It's always in the back of my mind, but at the same time we needed to figure out the best way for our family to educate our kids in the middle of a global pandemic.

We also knew that they deserved a better education than we could've given them at home.

If the home-learning situation earlier this year taught me anything, it is that teachers do a helluva job, and it's not an easy job. In fact, beyond just teaching their students, which is an adventure in itself I'm sure, teachers care and invest in their kids. Or, I should say, they care and invest in OUR kids. They go to work every day with the goal of helping our kids learn and be better, and they often go home at night to their families and they don't turn off the teacher switch. It's not a nine-to-five job or mentality. I know this, because my mom is a teacher, and I can't even count how many times her career would find its way into our lives.

It's the little things, like when we'd be shopping and she'd find something that would be great for her class, she would often buy it out of her own pocket. Or, when a kid would come to school in the dead of winter in just a hoodie she would bring in one of our old jackets, or get us to keep an eye out for a jacket in that kid's size from a store or from one of our friends. She always kept snacks in her drawer in case someone's lunch fell short or was forgotten, and she made her own National Day calendars before that was even a thing.

"Many teachers I know do similar things," she told me.

In everyday life teachers are the unsung heroes who, whether it's in the job description or not, help us raise our kids and help us shape who they are and who they become. And I don't mean that they're babysitters, I just mean that they spend so much time with our kids, that they recognize things that we, as parents may not even see, and they can sometimes reach our kids in places that we can't reach.

The impact that a teacher has is so great and can be so powerful and inspiring that it can literally change somebody's whole life and the imprint can be felt forever. We owe them a lot. As I write this, I think of some of my own teachers who changed my life and who believed in me way before I

believed in myself. That impact. That impression. That imprint. It was so important to who I am and to who I became.

But, in the middle of a pandemic it's hard to call them heroes because they are more than that.

Thanks to teachers, school administrators, janitorial staff, educational employees, early childhood educators and anyone else who is responsible for making our schools operational and functional during COVID, our kids have a sense of normalcy during some of the strangest, abnormal times of their lives. I know so many teachers are probably scared, and they're stressed out and stretched thin. I know that many don't want to be in the position of being around all of our kids while this invisible sickness hovers. I know that there are no words to adequately express appreciation for being on the front lines with our kids.

The only words I can humbly and sincerely say are, "thank you".