

Arlene Ball Alpha Phi

Arlene joined Tri-Sigma in 1975 at Central Michigan University (Alpha Phi) as a 2nd semester junior. Her sister, Gail Reid Vettraino, joined Tri Sigma the following year! Arlene is a member of 3 alumnae chapters: Metro Detroit, Central Michigan and Florida Gulf Coast. She is the Alumnae Advisor for Beta Tau and Theta Theta collegiate chapters in Michigan. She and her husband Jim are proud of their two daughters, Jenni (Beta Tau) and Teresa. A retired elementary teacher, Arlene now enjoys playing with and "teaching" her grandson, Jacob, age 2. She also loves time spent with her mom (90) and takes care of Jim's mom (88) who lives with them and has dementia. She has been to every Convention since her first one in Washington DC, 1998, and hopes to make it to many more! As a 2014 Labyrinth participant, Arlene is grateful to the Foundation and urges sisters to join her in supporting it and to also apply for Labyrinth 2017.

Compassion.

What does it mean to be compassionate and how will compassion change the world?

On an old episode of The Andy Griffith Show, 12 year old Opie and another young lad were trying out for a week to be the best and fastest delivery boy in order to get the job at the local market. The owner of the store was so tired of them racing so much that he decided a day early to give Opie the job but would pay both boys to work the next day. Opie and the boys were both good sports and Opie was talking about how he was going to save his money to get a new bike. Opie asked the other boy what he would have saved his money for and the boy told him how his dad had been sick and there were lots of bills to pay at home. Opie felt sorry for the boy and intentionally got himself fired so the other boy could have the job. Although I thought it would have been better to just tell the owner to hire the other boy instead, young Opie showed COMPASSION by taking ACTION on his feelings of EMPATHY.

Recently in my state of Michigan, a football team along with the cooperation of the opposing team, let the team water-boy with Downs Syndrome run the field for a touchdown. That really made the boy's day. It was in the news and touched the hearts of many. Those coaches and team demonstrated Empathy in Action = Compassion!

Remember that song, "What the World Needs Now is Love Sweet Love" sung by Dionne Warwick or Jackie DeShannon? What we need is love in action. Can compassion be taught? Possibly, but it is more effective when it is modeled. When others witness acts of compassion, they are more apt to be compassionate as well. While we can wish that world leaders, terrorists and fighting countries would just show compassion, it actually starts at home with every one of us. We can make a difference in our own little circles of friends and family by choosing TO DO compassion! It is not always easy to do. Even those of us who feel that they are basically compassionate people, get overwhelmed and stressed.

Think of the difference you could make in your life and the lives of those around you if instead of snapping back with a retort or letting your frustration burst out, you just took a minute, exhaled and replied kindly. Anger begets anger. Compassion begets compassion. How about waving someone in or not responding when someone makes a driving error or cuts you off in traffic? How about baking or cooking something for the new or needy neighbor? Offer to watch a neighbor's children. Try looking around you and filling a need. You don't have to win an award or get a million likes on Facebook for your good deeds. Just look around and you will see many ways to show compassion. Just like a stone cast into the water will make circles of ripples that reach the shore; doing acts of compassion will have a domino effect in the world around you. Try it today!