“Great things are done by a series of small things brought together.” Vincent Van Gogh

The Pas is a community of around 6000 people. Within this small community there are many pockets of people who are adding sunshine to our daily lives. Parades are typical for the Trappers Festival and Canada Day but today a new parade has emerged. Teachers, schools, and various service groups have taken time to bring a message of love, are and hope to our small community. They are organizing car and vehicle parades to show support for school children and honour essential service workers. In doing so they are bringing a smile to the faces of all those that they encounter. All while keeping and maintaining social distancing practices.

 It all began with the teachers of Ecole’ Opasquia School followed by OCN teachers hosting a student parade back in May. The teachers of this school collaborated with the sole intent on showing their students how much they are missed. Cam Nagle commented that although the teachers are communicating using various distance platforms, it is not the same as being in the classroom. The teachers had created this special event to connect with their students and show them that they truly care. Together they rallied with a vehicle convoy, rather a parade, sporting balloons, flags, signs, tooting horns and brightening the day for their students from a distance. The excitement that the parade generated was incredible. They mapped out a parade route that involved travelling to places where their students live. The entourage spread the message of connection through Carrot Valley Hall, Young’s Point Road, Bachelor subdivision, Ralls Island, Umpherville, Wanless, Wally’s Place at Clearwater Lake and through the town of The Pas. They created an elaborate plan, mapping out all of the areas that their students live and brought the parade to them on the Friday prior to the May long weekend. The students and their parents truly appreciated and looked forward to the parade, also creating their own messages back to the teachers. One teacher commented that “This is what being a teacher is all about. Caring for our students and reaching out to them letting them know that they are not alone.” This is the work of just one school in our area. Others are following suit. Kelsey Community School hosted a Reverse Parade with a Beach Theme in mid June. This parade took on the theme of throwing on beach attire. Thank you for all the creative parades coming from the tri-community schools.

In addition, the Rotary Club of The Pas recently organized an “Appreciation Parade” involving officials of The Town of The Pas, RM of Kelsey, OCN, The Pas Fire Department, OCN Fire Department, RCMP and the Chamber of Commerce. Their primary purpose was to send messages of praise, thanks and encouragement to all essential service workers in this area. Crystal Krost spoke to the need to recognize the efforts of all essential service workers for keeping our area safe and healthy during the ongoing pandemic crisis. Many workers in care homes, hospitals, food stores, pharmacies and in delivery of goods are being recognized for their part in keeping our community safe. This parade included 3 fire vehicles, an RCMP cruiser and 8 rotarians in decorated vehicles with messages of appreciation. This parade went past the school, ambulance station, Shoppers Drug Mart, the Legion, RCMP, the Medicine Shoppe on Fischer, St. Paul’s, the hospital, over the bridge, to Beatrice Wilson, OCN RCMP station, and past the Otineka Mall.

 Kelsey Community School recently put together a video message wishing Manitoba a Happy 150th Birthday. This school highlighted their services as well as our northern region. They sent out a message to all Manitobans in a creative way. Video interaction is becoming the new norm for connecting with others. Kelsey Community School involved sectors of their staff, students and their families to speak to the wonders of this area. Very creative and innovative. The schools are rocking, putting themselves out there in the social media world as well as in real time on the streets.

If you have missed the parades, it is not too late. Margaret Barbour Collegiate Institute and Mary Duncan School have announced a 2020 Graduation Parade. They are encouraging floats to assemble on June 26 to honour Graduates. The schools and service groups are certainly doing their part.

There is no shortage of things that have come to surface during this pandemic. It is extremely important to be kind to each other during times of distancing. We all appreciate an act of kindness and gesture or acknowledgement. Today I acknowledge the good work of Ecole’ Community School, Kelsey Community School, Opaswayak Educational Services, the Rotary Club of The Pas and all those who have played a part in bringing these parades to our community. Kudos to each of you in creating a kinder place to live, work and play.

Make Shift Happen.