



From the Director
by
Ann
Dugger

Together we can, together we will, make a difference

Last month I concluded my article with the statement that I was feeling bereft, that a big chunk of my life seemed missing after Ted's death. If *bereft* captured my sentiment last month, I think *disquieted* might be a better fit for this month. With the slipping economy, constant talk of a recession that could quickly turn into a depression, increasing unemployment, state budgets bursting, and programs being slashed or threatened, it leaves us more than just disquieted.

Do we still dare believe **Together we can, together we will, make a difference?** Headlines remind us we have more missing children and no clues where they are. We so want to believe that **Together we can...**

A 25-year-old Jacksonville

man has been arrested for pursuing sexual relationships with girls he believed to be 6 and 9 years old and for assaulting an officer in his attempt to flee. Somehow we still need to hope that **Together we will...**

Animal cruelty by youngsters, seen as symptom of a bigger problem. Senior citizens assaulted and murdered. Home invasion robberies leaving us fearful in our own homes. Lord, please help us to **Make a Difference...**

The statement "Together we can" is more than a platitude; it is a declaration of intent. It presupposes that YOU and I - WE - are not alone. It is not up to us individually; we must share the load. I can't do it alone. Nor can you. We don't have to. I have talents and weaknesses; so do you. Where

I am weak, YOU may be strong. Where YOU are weak...do you see where this goes?

Together we will is not simply a declaration of confidence. It is not a presumptive arrogance that suggests we can do anything we want. If this statement is to be true, we must view this part of our slogan as a commitment. **Together we will** because we won't quit too early. Our view must be that **together we will** because the need is too great to let it go.

When you have handed out boxes of Kleenex to parents worried about their children as either victims or perpetrators, you know you dare not come up short. **Together we will** because together we must. This statement is not just a commitment; it should be a prayer, pre-supposing that God

is willing. Then, and only then, "Together we Will..."

Make a Difference offers us a variety of choices. Making a difference means seeking an alternative course, where we take negatives and make them positive. This is where we begin our search for what is right and what is wrong, where we evaluate options to reverse the wrongs, or at least lessen their impact.

This is where our declarations and commitments get their hands dirty, where we teach our children that they really are more important than our own selfish pursuit of satisfying appetites rather than needs, where we communicate to our culture that there is nothing glamorous about addictions or anything sexy about walking out on our families or our children.

The desire to **Make a Difference** also acknowledges that we must be realistic in our pursuits. We can't make crime go away, but we can make a difference in lives affected by crime. We can pray for our government and business leaders. We can pray for police officers and fire and rescue personnel.

We can call and write elected officials to offer our suggestions and support, attend city council and ShAdCo meetings, educate ourselves about candidates and vote in every election, write cards of encouragement to victims or cook a meal for one of them, call police when we see something suspicious, speak out against violence. We can get involved!

Together we can...Together we will...Make a Difference! We CAN make our city safe!

PIE...

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Resource Officers and they will tell you that they interact with children whose only experience with the law is when the police have been called to their home or neighborhood because of crime and violence. People these

children know, and love, are being arrested; and are carrying knives or guns; or aren't productive members of society.

So these kids don't have the role models that they need. I'm proud to have members of my

Agency serving as a role model by their daily actions and interaction with citizens. This is prevention.

I support *The Jacksonville Journey's* intervention and prevention programs. Yes, we need more police officers to

handle the enforcement piece of the P-I-E. But without youth centers for tutoring and sports, without structured recreation, without a Juvenile Assessment Center, so kids in trouble can receive help from across the

spectrum of government and social services....without all of these programs, I fear that the only time some of our youth will get the help they need is from behind bars. And that is costing us far too much.

Faith Corner

The Faith Community holds the key to true Restorative Justice for all mankind. Many churches and businesses support this concept. The Justice Coalition wishes to thank the following for their support in our quest for this goal of compassion and understanding:

Inspirational Thought


Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. - Isaiah 59:1-2


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