



“Scarves with a Story”



By: Kali Wells

1) Identify Your Concern

When this “Take Action” project began, I had a friend who almost died. His heart stopped two times in one evening, and the Doctors brought him back to life. To be considerate of him and his privacy, I do not wish to publish the details here, but I’m sure we have all known someone who has been in an awful situation, and all our heart wants to do is help them and show them that there is hope.

After this near death experience, my friend was notified that his Medicare card was expired.

Because of this, he was told that he would have to wait at least three months for it to be renewed.

The situation was hopeless, he could not even go to see a Doctor, much less get the treatment he needed after his traumatic experience.

I talked to my Social Studies Professor, Theodore Christou, about trying to get my friend a Medicare card so that he could get the medical care he needed before things got worse. I also knew that somehow, he needed to get to a Doctor. “Ted” said to me: “it looks like you have a Take Action project!”

From that point I had to figure out HOW I was go to get him the help he needed. I was so concerned because my friend (who is in his early twenties) felt like there was no hope left in this awful situation. I could not see a light at the end of the tunnel, so to speak, either.

By becoming involved in his situation, I hoped to achieve three main goals. The first was to get him to a Doctor as soon as possible and I decided I would raise money to pay for his appointment. The second was to get him a Medicare number as soon as possible, so I decided I would go straight down the Government route and see if they could somehow waive the three month waiting period. My third and overall goal was to prove, that no situation, no matter how much it is riddled with complications, is ever hopeless.

2) Research Your Concern

I began my research by trying to understand WHY they had put him on a three month waiting period in the first place, and WHY a Canadian citizen would be denied immediate health care, especially after almost losing his life. Thankfully, I had worked for my provincial Department of Health in the past, so I took the most logical step I could think of and talked to some experts in the field. I did not understand Medicare, so I talked with people who could explain it. I believe

this was the most important step in my “Take Action” project; I decided to ask for help immediately from those who I thought might be able to help me. I also accepted the fact that if they could not help me, then at the very least they could explain a few things to me and that I would learn something along the way.

I knew that there were varying points of view regarding his situation, many of them bounced around in my head and discouraged me from even trying to take action in the first place: “things like this happen to people all the time,” “The Government does not have time to focus on one person’s situation,” “he should have renewed his health card and none of this would have happened.” These were all very true points of view, and they were harsh. I read government documents on Medicare that clearly stated that it was the card-holder’s fault if they allowed it to expire. But then, I came across a document that stated that if the card-holder did not permanently change their place of residence, or if they were only out of province for a temporary period of time, then they should be exempt from the three month wait period. This gave me a bit of hope, as my friend was a student and only temporarily changed his place of residence to further his education.

It took time for me to get in to the Department of Health and talk with people who could answer my questions, so during my own waiting period, so to speak, I decided to try and raise money to at least get my friend to a Doctor. Even if it ended up taking me three months to get him a Medicare number, I knew he needed some immediate relief.

3) Find Out Who Supports You

I knew that if the Department of Health could not “change” his situation, they would at the very least support me by explaining “why” or they would tell me what steps I needed to take to help.

I decided to sell hand-woven scarves to raise money to send my friend to a Doctor. I went to Fabricville to pick up some materials and found out that I had immediate support for my project! They donated almost five bags of left-over fabric when I told them about my friend. They also told me to let them know if I needed more help. This was not part of my plan in the beginning, but their support gave me the little glimpse of hope I needed to keep going (as the Government route of things seemed to be a dead end).

4) Create a Plan

My first step was to get in touch with those closest to me, my family and friends. I sent messages and emails to friends and family to find out who would be interested in purchasing handmade scarves from recycled materials to help a friend in need. I received around twenty responses right away so I got to work. In the beginning I set out to raise \$1,000, but the scarves became a lot more time consuming than I planned, so I modified my original goal to this one:

1. Make 50 scarves
2. Sell scarves for \$10 each (I wanted to sell them for \$20 in the original plan and raise \$1,000, but I knew that on average, scarves in stores were selling for \$20 or more and I wanted people (especially students) to know that they were getting a good deal.
3. Sell to friends and family first.
4. Set up a table on Campus called “Scarves with a Story,” share a bit of my friend’s story and raise the rest of the \$500.

5) Take Action

The Scarves: I made the twenty scarves for my friends and family first and took in \$200. Then I made an additional 30 scarves for a table on Campus. I talked with the Student Union office directly and they were a great help. I booked a table for seven hours on a Friday afternoon and it just so happened that there was a special event going on at the University, and I sold all of my scarves in only two hours! I sent the \$500 to my friend right away, and it was just enough to cover his first appointment and get him a little bit of help while he was stuck in the abyss of the three month wait period. It was also just enough to provide him with a little bit of hope.

The Government: During this busy scarf weaving time (when I never wanted to see another piece of fabric EVER again, after working on them for so many hours) I finally had a meeting with a lady at the Department of Health. We sat down for an hour and I explained my friend's situation. She asked me to let her see what she could do and told me to come back in to see her (and bring a scarf for her to buy!)

I tried to get a second meeting, but it was taking a long time. So one afternoon, I went down to the Department myself and waited until she could see me. I ended up waiting outside the door for quite a while, but it was all worth it when we finally sat down again and she made some phone calls regarding my friend. The Department was aware of his case, but because I was not family, they could not give me details. I called him from the Government office to let him know they were working on helping him out. He was so happy.

Three hours later, after much conversation and calling, I left her office with a hug and a smile, and all the information I needed to help my friend get his Medicare number. It took a lot of work and perseverance, but we managed to have his Medicare number issued in only ONE month as

opposed to the three he would have had to wait. The plan changed many times along the way, and in hindsight I should have kept track of everything in a daily journal as opposed to writing all of this now. I was so busy “taking action” and weaving scarves night and day, that writing all of this down went by the way-side for a while. Writing it now, however, is like experiencing this rush of hope all over again; the indescribable feeling that wells up inside a person when they realise that they are more than capable of changing the world (or one person’s world) one little tiny baby step at a time.

6) Evaluate the Plan

The Scarves: The fund-raising part of the plan took in money quickly, but it was TIME-CONSUMING and extremely difficult for one person. I remember part way through this endeavour that one of my friends (who was not even part of the Bed program that I was embarking on this project for) offered to help me cut out the fabric I needed to make the rest of the scarves for the table on Campus. What a relief!

The Government: Some things happened that were not parts of the plan: I broke down in tears in the Government office. I was exhausted and worried about my friend who was suffering daily while waiting. At the end of our meeting, I was told that had I not gone in there and raised my concerns and helped with the process, he more than likely would have continued to suffer for the three-month period. This confirmed that I was doing the right thing, even though it was hard and exhausted all my energy. If I would have known how difficult this was going to be to do alone, I would have asked for more help. Like my father has told me since I was a kid, however, “Hindsight’s 20/20.”

7) Apply Your Learning

I have been mentally applying my learning through this project as an up and coming Elementary school teacher and have found the results to be nothing but EXCITING! After completing this project I feel that when I have my own class someday I can encourage my students to make change and help those in need. People told me this was impossible along the way, even my friend who I was doing all of this for, told me in the beginning that it was hopeless and there was nothing I could do to help in his situation. I believed him to a degree of about 99 percent, but when I decided to move forward with everything, I told him that it was that one percent (and a little bit of faith combined with that one percent) that I was holding on to.

The “You and your World” Primary curriculum document states that Social Studies is to promote student’s growth as individuals and citizens of Canada and to help students improve society. I believe that identifying a need and taking the seven steps mentioned above, with your students, fills the vast majority of the Curriculum outcomes as you are INFORMING your students in a tangible way that as Canadian Citizens they have the power to IMPROVE society, one little, seemingly IMPOSSIBLE, step at a time.

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,

Nothing is going to get better. It's not.”

— Dr. Seuss