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# Monthly Message: Streams Community Hub shares the real shape of love

February has a way of putting the word ?love? everywhere. On cards. In store windows. Across timelines.

Hearts, roses, chocolates, glitter.

Beautiful, yes. But when I look at our community through the lens of Streams, I see a different picture of love. Less sparkle. More snow boots. Less grand gesture. More everyday faithfulness.

At Streams, love looks a lot like showing up.

It looks like a parent in a winter coat, pulling into the parking lot after a long day, when it would be so easy to say, ?Not tonight.? Instead, they turn off the car, grab the backpack, and walk their child to the door. The hug is quick. The goodbye is ordinary. Underneath it is a quiet message: you matter enough for me to get you here.

It looks like a grandparent who drives in from another town because they know that one hour in a creative space might be the brightest part of their grandchild's week.

It looks like volunteers who arrive early to unlock the door, sweep the floors, line up the chairs, sharpen the pencils, and portion the snacks. No spotlight. No applause. Just a simple decision that when the kids arrive, the room will be ready for them.

It looks like an instructor who notices the child hovering at the edge of the group and finds a gentle way to draw them in. Or who stays a few minutes late because someone needs to talk through a hard day before they can go home and rest.

If you stand in the hallway at Streams and just listen, you can hear this kind of love in the sound of it.

The thud of boots on the mat.

The rise and fall of overlapping stories.

The burst of laughter from a classroom when something flops in the funniest way.

The soft ?Thank you, see you next week? as kids head back into the night.

None of those moments will end up in a Valentine's display. But they are stitched through with care.

Even our donors, many of whom we never see in person, are part of this love story. A small monthly gift may not feel like much from the sender's side. It disappears from a bank account with very little fanfare. Yet on our end, it lands like a steady promise. It says, ?You can count on this.?

That kind of consistency is what allows us to say yes to scholarships. Yes to paint, clay, fabric, microphones and flour. Yes to keeping our doors open and our lights on when the days are short and the nights come early.

Maybe I pay such close attention to this kind of love because of my dad.

We said goodbye to my father, Noel, last month. He grew up in deep poverty in a small village in Saint Lucia, and he spent his life working hard, building businesses, and opening doors that had once been closed to families like his. But what stands out to me most is not the titles he held or the things he built. It is the way he showed up for people.

He gave quietly. He helped students with school fees. He supported church and community projects. He used what he had to make life a little more secure for others, often one person at a time. During his time in public service, he even gave his entire Senate salary to fund scholarships for children from his home village. There was no big announcement. No demand for recognition. Just a deep sense that if he could lighten someone's load, he should.

His love for community did not arrive wrapped in speeches. It arrived in phone calls returned, needs noticed, bills covered, and hands extended. Simple, solid acts of service that said, ?You are not alone.?

As my family grieves, I can see more clearly that the work we do at Streams is, in its own way, carrying his legacy forward, rooted in the quiet belief that if you are able to create safety, opportunity, and belonging for someone, especially for a child, you should.

When someone becomes a monthly donor through our One of 1000 campaign, that is what I see. On paper, it is straightforward: 1,000 people giving $10 a month so we can keep programs strong and accessible. But underneath, it is a choice to show up in a quiet, faithful way for young people you may never meet.

Ten dollars a month will not change the world on its own. But one person deciding, ?I can do that,? and another person deciding the same, and another, and another, begins to look like something powerful.

It looks like the difference between turning a child away and telling them, ?Yes, there is a spot for you.?

It looks like snacks on the table instead of an empty bin.

It looks like the confidence to plan the next season of programs, because we know we are not building on air.

As we move through February, with all its talk of love, I find myself grateful for all the quiet ways I see that love lived out here. It may not come with roses and ribbons, but it comes with open doors, warm rooms, and adults who keep showing up, week after week.

If you have been part of that in any way, thank you. And if you are wondering how you might lean in a little more this year, I would invite you to consider becoming One of 1000. You can learn more or sign up at streamshub.org/oneof1000.

However you choose to support, my hope is that this month you will be reminded that love is not only something we feel. It is something we practice. One ride. One class. One quiet, faithful yes at a time.

And for me, it is also something I carry forward, in honour of a father who spent his life quietly doing just that.

This week's Community Voice submission was provided by Juli-Anne James, executive director of Streams Community Hub.