

**Request for the Induction of
the Late Donald Edward Ross Frisby
into the Kirkland Lake Hall of Fame**



"It Takes a Village to 'Raise' a Child"



Museum of Northern History
Kirkland Lake Hall of Fame
Nomination Form

Name of Candidate: Donald Edward Ross Frisby (deceased)

Candidate's Address: Pamela McBean (Daughter)

R. R. #2, Site #2, Box 55, Swastika, ON P0K 1T0

Phone: (705) 642-3900

Fax:

Email: pdmcbean@hotmail.com

List of Accomplishments (Attach supporting documents and photograph.).

1. Spearheaded a movement in the 1940's that commenced the birth of schools for the developmentally handicapped.
2. As a certified teacher, Mr. Frisby taught special education programs for approximately thirty (30) years.
3. Vice-Principal, King George Public School in Kirkland Lake.
4. Principal, Swastika Public School.
5. Special education consultant, Kirkland Lake School Board.
6. Inducted as a member of the Order of Canada (see attachment).
7. Attained Rank of "Major" in the Algonquin Regiment – honoured with "Centennial Medal".
8. One of the pioneers of the "Encore Club".
9. Recognition from Ogilvie Flour Mills for special education in Kirkland Lake.
10. Over 25 years Rotary Club Member; President in 1956.
11. Member of the Masonic Lodge.
12. Very involved in local "March of Dimes".
13. Area representative for Laurentian University.

Museum of Northern History
Kirkland Lake Hall of Fame

Nomination Form

Nominated by: Community Living Kirkland Lake

Address: P. O. Box 274

Kirkland Lake, ON

P2N 3H7

Phone: 705-567-9331 | Fax: 705-567-5005 | Email:

Signature:

Date: January 17, 2011

Send Nomination Form to:

Museum's Kirkland Lake Hall of Fame Committee

Museum of Northern History

P.O. Box 1148, 2 Chateau Drive

Kirkland Lake, ON P2N 3M7

Tel: 705-568-8800

Fax: 705-567-6611

Email: museum@tkl.ca



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His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston

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Order of Canada

Donald Frisby, C.M.

Kirkland Lake, Ontario

Member of the Order of Canada

Awarded on June 26, 1974; Invested on December 6, 1974

Founder of the first school for mentally disabled children in Kirkland Lake, Ontario. For his years of service to education and to the community.

Deceased on September 14, 1976

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Donald Edward Ross Frisby accepting membership, into the "Order of Canada" by the Right Honourable Jules Léger.

**Request for the
Induction of the Late Don Frisby
Into the Kirkland Lake Hall of Fame**

On behalf of “the Board” and “Administrative Staff” of “Community Living Kirkland Lake”, it is my pleasure and honour to present this submission of our nominee, namely, the late Donald Edward Ross Frisby, to be inducted into the Kirkland Lake Hall of Fame.



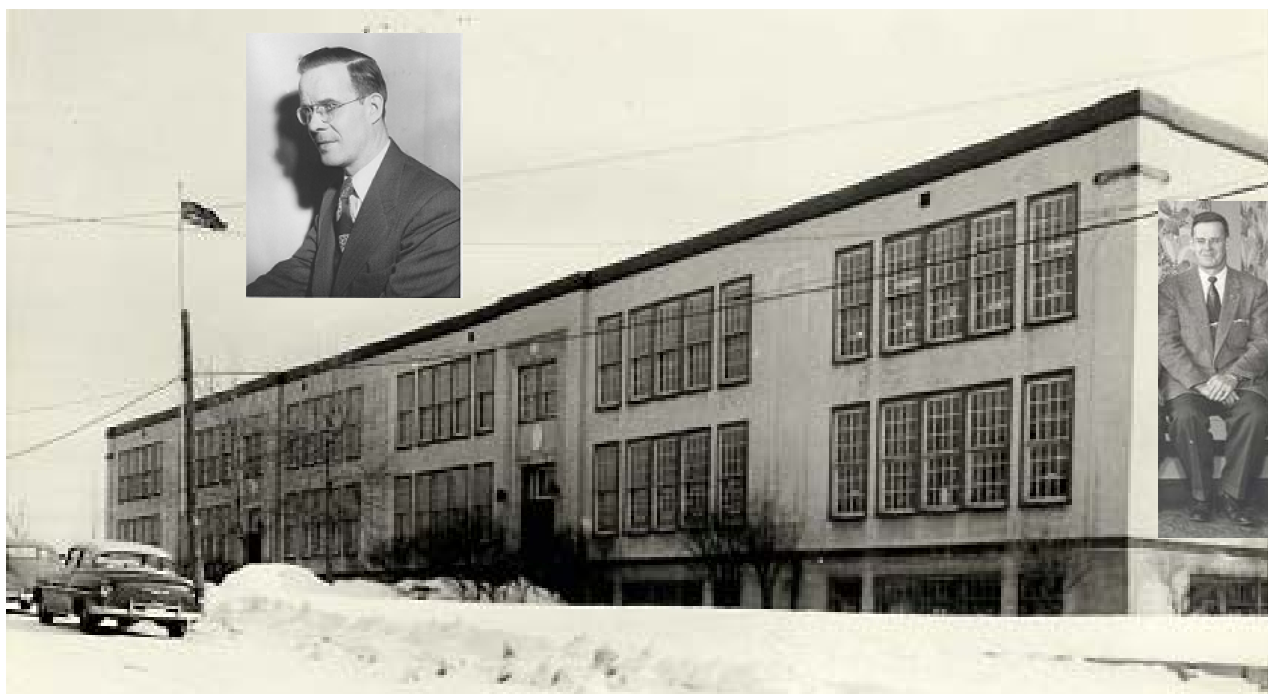
Preface:

My initial acquaintance with Don Frisby was in the early 70's. At that time I was a vice-principal of night school at Kirkland Lake Collegiate and Vocational Institute (K.L.C.V.I.). Mr. Frisby, as a certified teacher, taught “English as a Second Language” (ESL), to new Canadians. Throughout my tenure as a vice-principal at night school, Don and I often discussed the progress of his students and the needs of his program. My observations showed me that Mr. Frisby was a very compassionate teacher with a strong determination for teaching the necessary areas to his pupils. Education for these people was definitely top priority, as his night school classroom at K.L.C.V.I. appeared to be his second home. One could easily see that Don Frisby was definitely on an educational mission.

History of the Organization:

Prior to his Kirkland Lake position, Don was teaching in King, now known as “King City”.

The Kirkland Lake Public School Board became aware of his educational focus in Southern Ontario, and managed to bring him to Kirkland Lake's "Queen Elizabeth School" to teach special education courses to the slow learning pupils. It should be noted, that in those early years, Kirkland Lake's Queen Elizabeth School was the



largest school north of Toronto. It had a pupil enrolment of "one thousand, one hundred and twenty-six (1,126)". One of Don Frisby's obligations was I.Q. testing. In those days, students who had a test figure less than fifty (50), as stated by school law, were housed in an institution in Orillia. This establishment had very limited programs and requirements that were needed for these people, and regrettably, the students were labelled and divided into classes of "dull normals", "morons", "imbeciles", and "idiots". Although the Department of Health administered the institution, attempts were made to pass the responsibilities and the problems to other sectors of government. There appeared to be a "buck-passing" plight among both Provincial and Federal ministries, and consequently nothing was done.

Mr. Frisby was quite upset with the entire situation. His genuine concern for these people told him that something had to be done locally.

Prior to 1947, there wasn't a program in Canada or the United States that would recognize or support the needs of mentally handicapped children. It was then, April 14, 1947, that Donald Edward Ross Frisby, spearheaded an experimental class in the basement of Trinity United Church.

It took about two (2) months to form a committee for the establishment of this special class. It contained members of local clubs, namely, Kiwanis, Lions, Kinsmen and Rotary. Many meetings were held with Premier George Drew and in that year, 1947, Premier Drew authorized the Kirkland Lake experimental class with a grant of ten dollars (\$10.00) per month per pupil. Things started to move quickly. Trinity

United Church basement rent was thirty-one dollars (\$31.00) per month. A trained teacher was hired at a salary of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) per month.

Don Frisby's mission was accelerating. His mandate was even noted by the township police who provided free transportation for pupils to and from the school each day. A provincial grant was later obtained for that special service.

The criteria for admission into the special class was an I.Q. from fifty (50) to seventy (70). Children with an I. Q. lower than fifty (50), had to remain at home.

In June 1948, an inspector made the first pupil report. People in government and medical professions were amazed at the progress that the students made within one year. The report showed:

- a) Four (4) students reading pre-primer at the third level.
- b) Two (2) students reading restaurant menus and grocery ads.
- c) Six (6) students (senior group) writing by copying correctly.
- d) Seven (7) students coming to school without an escort.

Don Frisby proved his point; these children could learn and were entitled to the same services as other "so-called normal children". The success of this unique program spread quickly across the country. Some teachers were asked to speak in various parts of Ontario. Letters from parents came in from as far away as Canada's east and west coasts. Families said they would move to Kirkland Lake if their child could attend the school. Toronto had the first association, but Kirkland Lake had the first school. Mr. Frisby's keen educational focus and tremendous efforts were definitely strengthening the foundation of this much needed service.

By 1950, the service clubs, mentioned earlier, had raised twelve thousand dollars (\$12,000.00), but due to circumstances, could not guarantee financial support much longer. Financial problems became greater as the grant from the Department of Education had no sustaining guarantees.

In 1949, Toronto's Woodgreen School opened and received Federal help. Kirkland Lake had the first school that opened the door to this special education system, however did not receive federal support. This situation prompted the committee through numerous letters, telephone calls and lobbying, to request financial assistance. The government grant was extended to 1953. The school operated in the mornings only, and the salaries of teachers and their assistants, increased to one hundred and sixty dollars (\$160.00) and one hundred and fifty dollars (\$150.00) respectively.

The Ontario Association for Mentally Retarded Children was forming rapidly. Each agency had to apply for a charter in order to receive a school grant. Our



Kirkland Lake Association received a charter, again with the help and leadership of Don Frisby. In 1953, Kirkland Lake was able to send voting members to the first provincial meeting.

Don's mission was in high gear. In 1958, a campaign was launched to build a school. The target was forty thousand dollars (\$40,000.00) of which the community had to raise nineteen thousand, five hundred dollars (\$19,500.00). The remainder was to come from various government grants. The campaign moved slowly at first, but accelerated when the local radio station and newspaper became involved. Within a week, thirty five thousand (\$35,000.00) was raised for the project. However the newly formed Association had to continually fundraise in order to meet all expenses.

Don Frisby's dream became a reality; "Alpha School" was born. The name

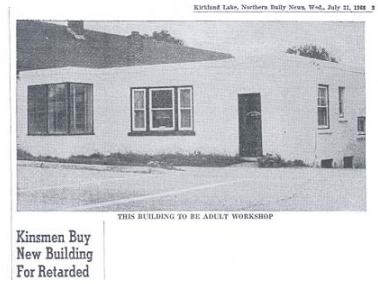


“Alpha” (Greek alphabet), was chosen to mark the “beginning” or the “first” of a new concept in education.

In 1962, the government granted an education to all students with an I.Q. of 50 and over. These children were referred to as “trainable retarded”. The school was sold to the Public School Board for one dollar (\$1.00). This transaction put it in the same category for government grants as other elementary schools. The Provincial government funded 80% and the municipality 20%.

The school progressed and the children became older. This resulted in a serious problem. Regulations only permitted school attendance to the age of eighteen (18). Several ex-students would sit on the steps every day in protest of the regulations. They just couldn't understand why they were allowed in the school on one day, and because of a birthday, not on the next. This was heart breaking for them and consequently, led to the first adult workshop in Kirkland Lake in 1965. The workshop started in a donated office building on Wright-Hargreaves Mine property and later moved to the corner of Main and Queen Streets, close to Alpha School.

The tiny workshop proved to be too small. A fundraising campaign took place and the workshop moved to 23 Government Road East in 1969. This location was the start of the “Adult Rehabilitation Centre” (ARC Industries). It was definitely a learning, industrial centre as



products started by the “folding of pocket hankies” for a local dry cleaner, to the working tasks of woodworking, ceramics, bookbinding and the packaging of Easter Seals. ARC Industries progressed in leaps and bounds, and basically became a small factory. The government was very involved and financial support was maintained through official budgeting. “ARC Industries” appeared to be bursting at the seams. This prompted the

Association in 1980, to move the enterprise to 4 Tweedsmuir Road, where it became a more sophisticated operation with a Manager, an Assessment Officer and Instructors. Contracts and programs were changed to keep up with the times.

April of 1980, was another milestone; the agency established its first group home, and others were added throughout the years. In 1993, ARC Industries was converted to an alternative format known as the “Vocational Alternatives Program”.

A major part of the “History of the Organization” in this document is based on Althea Contant’s farewell speech at the Agency’s 50th Anniversary (1997). Out of her 42 years on the Board, 29 were served as President. An “Althea Contant” bursary is awarded to one graduate student in each of Kirkland Lake’s high school systems, who pursues a career in the “Social Services” field. Mrs. Contant received Honorary Lifetime Membership for her dedication throughout the years.

Achievements of Don Frisby:

1. December 6, 1974 – inducted as a Member of the “Order of Canada” by the Right Honourable Jules Léger.



2. 1967 – achieved the rank of Major in the Algonquin Regiment. On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Confederation of Canada, he was honoured with the “Centennial Medal” for his many years of service with the “Army Cadets of Canada” on both local and national levels.







3. Encore Club – Mr. Frisby was one of the pioneers of the Encore Club in Kirkland Lake. It was developed for active people over fifty years of age and

evolved from a project called New Horizons which started in 1973. As support grew from seniors, the idea of the Encore Club took shape in the old post office. Don as the “Public Relations Officer” for the Encore Club, stated ... we want the club to become “a place where people over the age of fifty can drop in and feel comfortable.”

4. 1950 – the Ogilvie Flour Mills Co. Ltd., salutes Donald R. Frisby and the committee for special elementary education, Kirkland Lake, in its selection for the “Town of the Week.”



Other Accomplishments and Involvements:

1. Active member of the Rotary Club for over a quarter-century; was President in 1956. 
2. Member of the Masonic Lodge. 
3. Don was very involved in the local “March of Dimes”. 
4. Don was the area representative for Laurentian University.  **Laurentian University**
Université Laurentienne

Education History and Experience:

1. Primary education: Southern Ontario.
2. Secondary education: Richmond Hill, Ontario.
3. Post secondary education:
 - a) Bachelor of Arts (Laurentian University).
 - b) Many courses in Special Education.
4. Taught Special Education:
 - a) Approximately 10 years in King City.
 - b) Approximately 20 years in Kirkland Lake.
5. Vice-Principal for a few years at King George Public School.
6. Principal at Swastika Public School until its closure (original school).
7. Worked as a Special Education consultant for the school board until retirement in 1975.

Personal:

1. Donald Edward Ross Frisby (1910 – 1976)
 - a) In his spare time, Don was husband to Phyllis (Grinyer) for almost forty (40) years, and father to Pam (McBean). Before his passing, his greatest joy was being grandpa to his three grandchildren, Laurie, Jennifer and Jamie.

Postscript:

Since his arrival in Kirkland Lake, Don aspired to improve life for young men looking for a purpose, seniors, new Canadians arriving in town and intellectually disabled individuals. Throughout his life, he was always a selfless man, dedicated to worthy causes in his community of Kirkland Lake.

Don Frisby's dream has provided schooling for those underprivileged individuals who are now included as valuable assets in our society.

It should also be noted that further to Mr. Frisby's dream, through the efforts of Community Living Ontario and the Provincial Government, finally, as of 2009, all large institutions, housing persons with disabilities, have been closed. Community Living Ontario is working with Community Living Canada to ensure that this happens throughout the entire country.

As a member of the "Community Living Kirkland Lake Board", I submit this document of our nominee.

Respectfully,

Sidney J. Hamden

Our Ongoing Focus

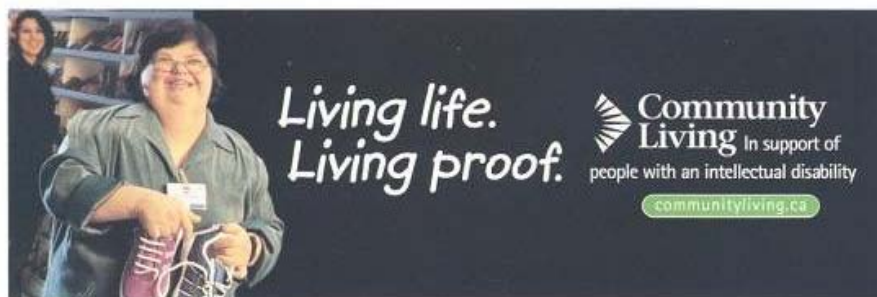
The main goal of Community Living Ontario is to provide a society where inclusion for individuals with "intellectual disabilities", are equally accepted. The following three bookmarkers and the two attached stories are for your perusal.




Kids Belong Together!
Include children who have an intellectual disability in the classroom. Be a part of making their dreams come true.
www.communityliving.ca • 1800 278-8025
Community Living Kirkland Lake
705 567-9331



Community Living



**Living life.
Living proof.**



Community Living
In support of
people with an intellectual disability
communityliving.ca

Something For Stevie—Dan Anderson

From [Stories for a Faithful Heart](#) by Alice Gray

I try not to be biased, but I had my doubts about hiring Stevie. His placement counselor assured me that he would be a good, reliable busboy. But I had never had a mentally handicapped employee and wasn't sure I wanted one. I wasn't sure how my customers would react. Stevie was short, a little dumpy, with the smooth facial features and thick-tongued speech of Down syndrome.

I wasn't worried about most of my trucker customers. Truckers don't generally care who buses tables as long as the food is good and the pies are homemade. The ones who concerned me were the mouthy college kids traveling to school; the yuppie snobs who secretly polish their silverware with their napkins for fear of catching some dreaded "truckstop germ;" and the pairs of white-shirted business men on expense accounts who think every truckstop waitress wants to be flirted with. I knew those people would be uncomfortable around Stevie, so I closely watched him for the first few weeks.

I shouldn't have worried. After the first week, Stevie had my staff wrapped around his stubby little finger. Within a month my truck regulars had adopted him as their official truckstop mascot. After that I really didn't care what the rest of the customers thought. He was a 21-year-old in blue jeans and Nikes, eager to laugh and eager to please, but fierce in his attention to his duties. Every salt and pepper shaker was exactly in its place, not a bread crumb or coffee spill was visible when Stevie got done with the table.

Our only problem was convincing him to wait to clean a table until after the customers were finished. He would hover in the background, shifting his weight from one foot to the other, scanning the dining room until a table was empty. Then he would scurry to the empty table and carefully bus the dishes and glasses onto the cart and meticulously wipe the table with a practiced flourish of his rag. If he thought a customer was watching, his brow would pucker with added concentration. He took pride in doing his job exactly right, and you had to love how hard he tried to please each and every person he met.

Over time, we learned that he lived with his mother, a widow who was disabled after repeated surgeries for cancer. They lived on their Social Security benefits in public housing two miles from the truckstop. Their social worker, who stopped to check on him every so often, admitted they had fallen between the cracks. Money was tight, and what I paid him was probably the difference between them being able to live together and Stevie being sent to a group home.

That's why the restaurant was a gloomy place that morning last August, the first morning in three years that Stevie missed work. He was at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester getting a new valve or something put in his heart. His social worker said that people with Down syndrome often have heart problems at an early age, so this wasn't unexpected. There was a good chance he would come through the surgery in good shape and be back at work in a few months. A ripple of excitement ran through the staff later that morning when word came that he was out of surgery, in recovery and doing fine. Frannie, my head waitress, let out a war whoop and did a little dance the aisle when she heard the good news.

Belle Ringer, one of our regular trucker customers, grinned. "Okay, Frannie, what was that all about?" he asked. "We just got word that Stevie is out of surgery and going to be okay," she responded. "I was wondering where he was," said Belle. Frannie quickly told him and the other two drivers sitting at his booth about Stevie's surgery, then sighed. "Yeah, I'm glad he is going to be okay," she said, "but I don't know how he and his mom are going to handle all the bills. From what I hear, they're barely getting by as it is." Belle Ringer nodded thoughtfully, and Frannie hurried off to wait on the rest of her tables.

After the morning rush, Frannie walked into my office. She had a couple of paper napkins in her hand a funny look on her face. "What's up?" I asked. "That table where Belle Ringer and his friends were sitting," she said, "this was folded and tucked under a coffee cup." She handed the napkin to me, and three \$20 bills fell onto my desk when I opened it. On the outside, in big, bold letters, was printed "Something For Stevie."

"Pony Pete also asked me what that dance was all about," she said, "so I told him about Stevie and his mom and everything, and Pete looked at Tony and Tony looked at Pete, and they ended up giving me this." She handed me another paper napkin that had "Something For Stevie" scrawled on its outside. Two \$50 bills were tucked within its folds. Frannie looked at me with wet, shiny eyes, shook her head and said simply, "Truckers."

That was three months ago. Today is Thanksgiving, the first day Stevie is supposed to be back to work. His placement worker said he's been counting the days until the doctor said he could work, and it didn't matter at all that it was a holiday. He called 10 times in the past week, making sure we knew he was coming, fearful that we had forgotten him or that his

job was in jeopardy. I arranged to have his mother bring him to work. We met them in the parking lot and invited them both to celebrate his day back.

Stevie was thinner and paler, but couldn't stop grinning as he pushed through the doors and headed for the back room where his apron and busing cart were waiting. "Hold up there, Stevie, not so fast," I said. I took him and his mother by their arms. "Work can wait for a minute. To celebrate you coming back, breakfast for you two is on me. I led them toward a large corner booth at the rear of the room. I could feel and hear the rest of the staff following behind as we marched through the dining room. Glancing over my shoulder, I saw booth after booth of grinning truckers empty and join the procession.

We stopped in front of the big table; its surface covered with a mess of coffee cups, saucers and dinner plates, all sitting crooked on dozens of folded paper napkins. "First thing you have to do, Stevie, is clean up this mess," I said, trying to sound stern. Stevie looked at me, and then at his mother, then pulled out one of the napkins. It had "Something for Stevie" printed on the outside. As he picked it up, two \$10 bills fell onto the table. Stevie stared at the money, then at dozens of napkins peeking from beneath the tableware, each with his name printed or scrawled on it.

I turned to his mother. "There's over \$10,000 in cash and checks on that table, all from truckers and trucking companies that heard about your problems. Happy Thanksgiving!" Well, it got real noisy about that time, with everybody hollering and shouting, and there were a few tears, too. But you know what's funny? While everybody else was busy shaking hands and hugging each other, Stevie, with a big, big smile on his face, was busy clearing all the cups and dishes from the table... best worker I ever hired.



Two Choices

What would you do?....you make the choice.

Don't look for a punch line, there isn't one.

Read it anyway.

My question is:

Would you have made the same choice?

At a fundraising dinner for a school that serves children with learning disabilities, the father of one of the students delivered a speech that would never be forgotten by all who attended. After extolling the school and its dedicated staff, he offered a question:

'When not interfered with by outside influences, everything nature does, is done with perfection.

Yet my son, Shay, cannot learn things as other children do. He cannot understand things as other children do.

Where is the natural order of things in my son?'

The audience was stilled by the query.

The father continued. 'I believe that when a child like Shay, who was mentally and physically disabled comes into the world, an opportunity to realize true human nature presents itself, and it comes in the way other people treat that child.'

Then he told the following story:

Shay and I had walked past a park where some boys Shay knew were playing baseball. Shay asked, 'Do you think they'll let me play?' I knew that most of the boys would not want someone like Shay on their team, but as a father I also understood that if my son were allowed to play, it would give him a much-needed sense of belonging and some confidence to be accepted by others in spite of his handicaps.

I approached one of the boys on the field and asked (not expecting much) if Shay could play. The boy looked around for guidance and said, 'We're losing by six runs and the game is in the eighth inning. I guess he can be on our team and we'll try to put him in to bat in the ninth inning.'

Shay struggled over to the team's bench and, with a broad smile, put on a team shirt. I watched with a small tear in my eye and warmth in my heart. The boys saw my joy at my son being accepted.

In the bottom of the eighth inning, Shay's team scored a few runs but was still behind by three.

In the top of the ninth inning, Shay put on a glove and played in the right field. Even though no hits came his way, he was obviously ecstatic just to be in the game and on the field, grinning from ear to ear as I waved to him from the stands.

In the bottom of the ninth inning, Shay's team scored again.

Now, with two outs and the bases loaded, the potential winning run was on base and Shay was scheduled to be next at bat.

At this juncture, do the others let Shay bat and give away their chance to win the game?

Surprisingly, Shay was given the bat. Everyone knew that a hit was all but impossible because Shay didn't even know how to hold the bat properly, much less connect with the ball.

However, as Shay stepped up to the plate, the pitcher, recognizing that the other team was putting winning aside for this moment in Shay's life, moved in a few steps to lob the ball in softly so Shay could at least make contact.

The first pitch came and Shay swung clumsily and missed.

The pitcher again took a few steps forward to toss the ball softly towards Shay.

As the pitch came in, Shay swung at the ball and hit a slow ground ball right back to the pitcher.

The game would now be over.

The pitcher picked up the soft grounder and could have easily thrown the ball to the first baseman.

Shay would have been out and that would have been the end of the game.

Instead, the pitcher threw the ball right over the first baseman's head, out of reach of all team mates.

Everyone from the stands and both teams started yelling, 'Shay, run to first!

Run to first!

Never in his life had Shay ever run that far, but he made it to first base.

He scampered down the baseline, wide-eyed and startled.

Everyone yelled, 'Run to second, run to second!'

Catching his breath, Shay awkwardly ran towards second, gleaming and struggling to make it to the base.

By the time Shay rounded towards second base, the right fielder had the ball. The smallest guy on their team who now had his first chance to be the hero for his team.

He could have thrown the ball to the second-baseman for the tag, but he understood the pitcher's intentions so he, too, intentionally threw the ball high and far over the third-baseman's head.

Shay ran toward third base deliriously as the runners ahead of him circled the bases toward home.

All were screaming,

'Shay, Shay, Shay,

all the Way Shay'

Shay reached third base because the opposing shortstop ran to help him by turning him in the direction of third base, and shouted, 'Run to third!'

Shay, run to third!'

As Shay rounded third, the boys from both teams, and the spectators, were on their feet screaming, 'Shay, run home! Run home!'

Shay ran to home, stepped on the plate, and was cheered as the hero who hit the grand slam and won the game for his team

'That day', said the father softly with tears now rolling down his face, 'the boys from both teams helped bring a piece of true love and humanity into this world'.

Shay didn't make it to another summer. He died that winter, having never forgotten being the hero and making me so happy, and coming home and seeing his Mother tearfully embrace her little hero of the day!

AND NOW A LITTLE FOOT NOTE TO THIS STORY:

We all send thousands of jokes through the e-mail without a second thought, but when it comes to sending messages about life choices, people hesitate.

The crude, vulgar, and often obscene pass freely through cyberspace, but public discussion about decency is too often suppressed in our schools and workplaces.

If you're thinking about forwarding this message, chances are that you're probably sorting out the people in your address book who aren't the 'appropriate' ones to receive this type of message Well, the person who sent you this believes that we all can make a difference.

We all have thousands of opportunities every single day to help realize the 'natural order of things.'

So many seemingly trivial interactions between two people present us with a choice:

Do we pass along a little spark of love and humanity or do we pass up those opportunities and leave the world a little bit colder in the process?

A wise man once said every society is judged by how it treats it's least fortunate amongst them.

You now have two choices:

1. Delete
2. Forward

and we've given you a third choice....

Decide how you can help someone like Shay today.

May your day,

be a Shay Day!