

THE LONG REACH OF KINDNESS

Alex Haley, the author of *Roots* – the 12-hour miniseries about Haley’s ancestors that eventually earned nine Emmy awards among others and still stands as the most-watched miniseries in U.S. history – told the story of how his father had his life changed by a simple act of kindness.

He was the youngest of eight children, living in a sharecropper family. Everyone in the family was needed to help with the crops.

After several years of schooling, the family pressed each child into service on the farm. Fortunately, the boy’s mother intervened on behalf of her child and he was allowed to stay in school. When he was ready for college, he chose the Lane Institute, working as many as four jobs in addition to full-time studies. It was physically and emotionally wearing.

He worked for a summer as a porter on a train and happened to meet a man early in the morning who couldn’t sleep and wanted to talk. This man was impressed by a black porter working to earn money for college, and tipped him the unimaginable sum of \$5.

By the end of that summer, Mr. Haley had to decide whether to convert his summer earnings into a mule and begin to sharecrop, or to stretch to complete his last year at school. He took the risk of completing college.

Alex Haley told what happened next. “When Dad arrived on campus, the president called him into his office and showed him a letter he had just received. The letter was from the elderly man whom my father had met on the train, and it contained a check for \$518 to cover Dad’s tuition and living expenses for one full year.”

The kindness of an unknown friend made all the difference in the life of Alex Haley’s father, Alex Haley himself, and every succeeding generation of that family.

Acts of care and love – even from total strangers – can achieve incredible results. They touch the heart as nothing else can.

That’s the mission of Life Care and Century Park. And I am inspired by the commitment of our associates to those who come their way.

Be kind to one another (Philippians 4:32 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter