

## The Hand of a Teacher: A Thanksgiving Story

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Thanksgiving Day was near. The first grade teacher gave her class a fun assignment -- to draw a picture of something for which they were thankful. Most of the class might be considered economically disadvantaged, but still many would celebrate the holiday with turkey and other traditional goodies of the season. These, the teacher thought, would be the subjects of most of her student's art. And they were. But Douglas made a different kind of picture. Douglas was a different kind of boy. He was the teacher's true child of misery, frail and unhappy. As other children played at recess, Douglas was likely to stand close by her side. One could only guess at the pain Douglas felt behind those sad eyes. Yes, his picture was different. When asked to draw a picture of something for which he was thankful, he drew a hand. Nothing else. Just an empty hand. His abstract image captured the imagination of his peers. Whose hand could it be? One child guessed it was the hand of a farmer, because farmers raise turkeys. Another suggested a police officer, because the police protect and care for people. Still others guessed it was the hand of God, for God feeds us. And so the discussion went -- until the teacher almost forgot the young artist himself. When the children had gone on to other assignments, she paused at Douglas' desk, bent down, and asked him whose hand it was. The little boy looked away and murmured, "It's yours, teacher." She recalled the times she had taken his hand and walked with him here or there, as she had the other students. How often had she said, "Take my hand, Douglas, we'll go outside." Or, "Let me show you how to hold your pencil." Or, "Let's do this together." Douglas was most thankful for his teacher's hand. Brushing aside a tear, she went on with her work.



The story speaks of more than thankfulness. Kiwanians are teachers in so many ways, reaching out to the Douglasses of the world, taking their hands. The story says something about the impact of teachers teaching and parents parenting and friends showing friendship, the power of showing up in the life of a child. They might not always say thanks. But the children we serve as Kiwanians will remember our hands reaching out to guide them. May your Thanksgiving Day be filled with joy, laughter and lots of gratitude. You are truly making a positive difference in the world.

There will be no meeting this week. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving!