The Golden Rule: How to live in a hateful world

By Chaplain Corey T. Thornton

Every so often I like to take the book, "All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten" by Robert Fulghum, off of my bookshelf and thumb through it. In it, Fulghum shares some useful advice such as, play fair, don't hit people, share everything, don't take things that aren't yours, say you're sorry when you hurt somebody, to name a few. This book serves to remind me that even in a world that appears to be so diversified and complicated, often doing the right thing is simple.

We live in a world where, as we are informed by television news programs, books that are sacred to some are being burned as a form of protest and people on the other side of the world are killing others because their sacred books are being burned. We are truly a global village, connected by a worldwide media network and mass transportation capabilities. While there are a multitude of benefits to be derived from this connectivity, there are at least an equal number of negative outcomes to contend with.

People's actions can help others who may live on the other side of the world from them and they can also do harm to others whom they may never meet. Though we can be thankful for many examples of the former exchange, too often we must regret the affects of the latter. I believe that our difficulties stem from our divisions. Divisions come when we see ourselves as qualitatively separate from others. A good way to describe it is as the "us and them syndrome." We claim a multitude of reasons why our divisions are justified, but they all end with the same result, treating others poorly. As the saying goes, "united we stand, divided we fall."

The more connected we become, the closer we come to this truth on a global scale. In our world, connected as it is, it would serve us well to consider whether there are any principles that might guide us towards living in harmony with each other. One principle that I would commend to everyone might seem simple at first, but, like the seemingly simple advice from Fulghum's book, it carries profound implications for the good. That principle is the Golden Rule.

The Golden Rule is an ethical maxim that can be found in the best of ancient religions and philosophies and is still found relevant and active in our present age. It has been stated in different ways. The Bible contains it in the Hebrew Scriptures: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," (Leviticus 19:18b).

We also see it in the Christian New Testament in the teachings of Jesus Christ: "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them," (Matthew 7:12a). There are many other statements of the same principle made by figures like Confucius and Buddha as well as in most of the world's major religions. The point is simple: treat others as you would like to be treated.

Another way to say it would be to view others as if they are apart of you and you are apart of them. As soon as we see others as separate from ourselves our tendency is to be certain that we take care of ourselves, even at the expense of others. You hear this in the familiar quote, "Takin' care of number one." The Golden Rule draws us back together and adjusts our perspective towards the reality that we are all in this together and that everyone deserves the respect and dignity given to them by the creator.

There are a lot of differing ways that we live our lives. We have differing ethnicities, nations, cultures, religions, ideologies and et cetera. But I would commend to you the Golden Rule as a principle that supports all that is good and healthy in every human endeavor. I would be highly suspect of any endeavor that wished to not consider the Golden Rule but still professed to produce healthy and happy lives.

It may seem simple but is profoundly true: the Golden Rule teaches us that we cannot live at the expense of others. To do so may bring short term benefits, but it ultimately will lead to demise. One simple way to begin to incorporate the Golden Rule into your life is to ask daily, "What will I do today to make other lives better?" It's something that everyone can do and it will go a long way toward making our world a better place to live.

Rollout approaches for young adult TRICARE enrollment

By Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service

Qualified young adults up to age 26 soon will be able purchase TRICARE military health plan coverage on a month-to-month basis. TRICARE officials announced plans to roll out the new Young Adult Program, including an option to make coverage retroactive to Jan. 1, in the near future.

This, officials said, will ensure military families aren't left out as the new national health care reform law extends parents' health insurance for their children up to age 26.

The new program will allow qualified, unmarried military children up to age 26 to buy health care coverage under their parents' TRICARE plans through age 26. That's up from the current maximum age of 21, or age 23 for full-time college students whose parents provide more than half of their financial support.

"The fiscal 2011 National Defense Authorization Act, which President Barack Obama signed Jan. 7, gave the Defense Department the authority it needed to extend TRICARE coverage to young adults," TRICARE spokesman Austin Camacho said.

This ensures benefits extended are in line with those all American families receive under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which took effect in March 2010.

"We've been working hard to make sure we could put TRICARE Young Adult on a fast track," said Rear Adm. Christine S. Hunter, director of the TRICARE Management Activity. "Fortunately for our beneficiaries concerned about health care coverage for their adult children, the law signed by the president includes opportunities for military families to elect this new premium-based plan retroactive to Jan. 1."

Qualified young adults who do not have access to employer-sponsored health care coverage will be eligible to purchase it through TRICARE on a month-to-month basis, according to Camacho.

TRICARE officials expect to announce premium costs shortly, before enrollment begins. But because the 2011 defense authorization specifies that the rates must cover all program costs, Camacho said, premiums will be based on commercial insurance data about the costs of providing care.

Once premiums are determined, officials encourage eligible beneficiaries to explore all of their health care coverage options to choose a plan that makes sense for them.

Hunter estimated that the program, once in place, could extend TRICARE coverage to several hundred thousand additional beneficiaries.

"The premium allows us to provide the benefit to our military families while responsibly addressing the impact of health care costs on the [defense] budget," Hunter said.

According to Camacho, Officials plan to roll out the new program in two phases, first offering a premium-based TRICARE Standard/Extra benefit. Then, later this year, they plan to introduce the TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Prime Remote plan, including overseas options, and the Uniformed Services Family Health Plan.

Eligible young adults may submit an application and premium payment to the appropriate regional or overseas contractor for processing. Cost shares, deductibles and catastrophic caps will vary, based on the plan selected and the sponsor's status.

Young adult beneficiaries will receive an enrollment card after they buy coverage and their payment is reflected in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System.

Coverage must be purchased within 60 days of losing TRICARE eligibility. Information about the program is posted on the TRICARE website.

Pet of the Week

Sakagi is this week's Pet of the Week. Sakagi is a sweetheart of a cat who loves to be in houses, tomatoes or whatever you've got. She took a while to warm up at the shelter, though in a happy and loving home, she'd come out much faster. She loves treats and being brushed. Sakagi is looking for a family that will love her and never leave her. Is that family your family? To find out more about Sakagi or any animal at Pets Are Worth Saving (P.A.W.S.), contact them at 243-9996, by e-mail to usskittytalk.yokosuka@gmail.com or visit the P.A.W.S. website at www.pawsyokosukajapan.com.

Photo courtesy of P.A.W.S.