

## **Offering a HAND and HELPFUL Lift**

**By Franck Dietz**

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Karen and I spent a string of summers directing junior and mid high camps. The themes and adventures were about developing community and a growing discovery of the world(s) around us. Each week began with fun experiences of group building and creation of bonds in “family groups.” One of the early first afternoon exercises was a tool to solidify the young teens’ relationships for the week. The group of six to eight came close for a circle, surrounding the young adult leader/counsellor. Each group member was invited to reach in with one arm so that together the group would lift their leader from an outstretched position. For the newcomers it was a “wow” to note how easily the lifting took place when each person did their part. It was not surprising to hear references to the iconic experience as the week’s adventures unfurled.

Hold that image of mutuality as we look toward an opportunity that comes our way in this month of September. Even with all that swirls about in our community impacting education, work space, and other endeavors, a big picture effort to be helpful together comes our way. From 12:01 a.m. until 11:59 p.m. on 23 September, THE BIG GIVE is coming as an opportunity to share with others. There will be an array of “asking” by well deserving efforts near and far. One asking is to reach beyond the immediate in order to support Comal County Conservation Alliance (CCCA) and its COMAL LAND CONSERVATION FUND. In so doing your grandchildren and others who reap the benefits of this generosity will thank you! Yes, on 23 September through the BIG GIVE you will have an opportunity to reach your hand in so as to join others in strengthening cooperative efforts at conservation aimed to assist in “keeping Comal wild.” The protection of some green areas for the long journey of our beloved community will be the object of such gifts and efforts.

We all can observe and experience the rapid rate of our community’s growth and the demand for commercial and home development. Considerable regional and even national attention have brought dramatic focus to our whirlwind pace of change! Thus, for those seeking to protect and set aside some remaining parcels of “wild” or agricultural legacy lands, the time is NOW, not later! The previously noted Comal Land Conservation Fund of CCCA is an attempt to assist with even a few of the expenses heritage land families face when seeking to donate land value and future use to protected acreage. Such expenses include updated titles, appraisals, surveys, legal services and so much more. The efforts of CCCA are aimed to lend a hand and seek generous funding sources to help this happen where needed. One such regional partnership will be highlighted in a zoom CCCA community program 14 September. It should enhance an exploration of “Nature-based Solutions” to our development engine. Check out the informative handy website at [www.comalconservation.org](http://www.comalconservation.org). You’ll find there helpful discussions on numerous subjects, including the beneficial results of investment in open space.

The prolific writer about earthly benefits for us all, Wendell Berry once said: “In a country once forested.... the young woodland remembers ...a dreamer dreaming. The soil under the grass is dreaming of a young forest, and under the pavement the soil is dreaming of grass!”

Perhaps his images and thoughts give us a framework for extending a hand to assist with a helpful lift!  
Can we look for you in among the givers on 24 September? Thanks to many in advance.