

*Max Delsignore:* Northern New York Community Podcast. Stories from the heart of our community.

Thanks for checking out the Northern New York Community Podcast. I'm your host, Max Delsignore and joining me today as well is the executive director of the Northern New York Community Foundation, Rande Richardson. We have a special addition of the show right here for you. Philanthropy is happening in the North Country every day, and the acts of giving can come in any size, but they are always powerful. The story of Harold and Sally L'Huillier touches on the true meaning of community philanthropy, the values, the lessons and the importance of giving back. As we listen to their story I would encourage you to pull out some of the best lessons you can apply to your own form of community philanthropy.

Now Harold and Sally are natives of the North Country and we're thrilled to have them here and joining us today. So I think it'll be best to start from the very beginning and I think one of the most interesting aspects of your story is that you both grew up during the Great Depression era in the North Country. Now you lived in different communities, but not too far away from each other. What do you remember about growing up in the North Country during that era of time?

*Sally L'Huillier:* Well, I remember back in those days, most people didn't have much, and everybody always helped each other out. And it was instilled in me when I – as I was growing up to always help people the best way you could, and I've tried to do that all my life. I've always tried to help people, and Harold will tell about all the rationing and -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Oh, during the war. Second World War was really – really something. It put a lot of people behind as far as earning money and having certain foods, and there weren't any new cars. There was tire rationing. There wasn't even rubber in those days, or synthetic, and a while on the gas you had to have coupons for, you had to put the coupon, sticker on your windshield. You didn't pump your gas then, they had attendants come out and you could only get a certain amount of gas on that coupon. It was really – that was really strange. But growing up as a kid, I remember getting a quarter for an allowance and those days you could get into movies for about that price, and I said – so every Sunday I used to go to movies.

I wasn't far from Olympic Theatre on State Street, I used to go there and of course we used to go there, and of course we used to go to the old Avon, too, and brought – as far as philanthropy, my folks helped other people. My grandmother and grandfather helped us, because in those days we didn't have very much money. My father wasn't making much and during the Depression nobody was taking cabs, taxi cabs, and he was a cab driver. But you gave what you could to other people that were worse off, and that's something you learned and it stays with you for an awful long time. Now that we're able to be philanthropists, it's really enjoyable, I'll tell you.

*Max Delsignore:* You shared some good examples from when you were kids, of some of the things that your parents did, or you did together as families. Were there certain messages or things that they would say to you just to kind of emphasize, listen, this is why we need to help families that are in need, or help others that maybe are in a more challenging situation than we are?

*Harold L'Huillier:* We were more in need than people that we knew. We didn't really know that many people as kids, but growing up and going to school you could – you knew who were the ones that needed help. And you did what you could for them. Then of course in those days Watertown seemed separated by – like the North side was the poor side and the South side was the rich side, and neither two could meet. I don't know, it was that way in those days. It's like segregation.

*Max Delsignore:* - tell, you remember any things your parents told you as you were growing up? You know, they obviously demonstrated their own ways of giving back in the community, and neighbors helping neighbors, but did they ever impart anything to you, just to remember as you were getting older?

*Sally L'Huillier:* No. Not that I remember. The family – my father came from a big family and all the holidays we would get together at my grandmothers for big family dinners and you know, I do remember people talking about so and so isn't doing that well, and you know, people are helping, and things like that. But they never – as far as I remember, they didn't say anything specifically, but I just remember, you know, them talking about helping people when they needed help and to always remember that. But they didn't always say it and -

*Harold L'Huillier:* I remember somebody, my uncle and his wife had four kids and they were having a hard time making a go of things and our

parents helped them as best they could. And you see, you learn from that, you don't give up on your relatives.

*Sally L'Huillier:* No.

*Harold L'Huillier:* And you don't give up on your friends. If a friend needed a dollar you give him a dollar. But in those days nobody had much money. And the money back then wasn't – it was worth more than it is today, too. Like a quarter was worth a quarter. Today it's worth, what, ten cents? And – but it's – it was great. I don't like – we got to the 50s, that was really great.

*Max Delsignore:* Well, that's interesting, because my next question was thinking about that next era after World War Two was over with, and something you had mentioned previously was just – I don't know if it was a great relief but you could just sense the spirits of the communities kind of being lifted up because that era, that chapter in the country's history had ended.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Well, the economy was picking up real good, because they had to make stuff that they couldn't make before, and then we had a different president, and we had more jobs and more – we had more factories here at the time, and a lot of people went back to work, making things.

*Molly L'Huillier:* There were a lot more manufacturing companies -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah.

*Molly L'Huillier:* - back then in those days. A lot.

*Harold L'Huillier:* The 50s were just so much fun to grow up in. You didn't have a lot of crime, you didn't have poverty as much as you do today, and everybody just was happy and twiddle-le-dee.

*Max Delsignore:* Yeah, and carefree. Now I hear you graduated from Immaculate Heart Academy, correct? 1950?

*Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah.

*Max Delsignore:* And you entered the army right away for the Korean War?

*Harold L'Huillier:* No.

*Max Delsignore:* No?

- Harold L'Huillier:* I – I was – went to work for Fred Sheeran Radio. I worked there after school nights anyway, and weekends, and I went – after school I went to work with him for two years, then I got drafted.
- Max Delsignore:* Okay.
- Harold L'Huillier:* And I went to Camp Gordon it was then, and went to radio school for six months, which I really didn't need. But I had to learn their equipment, so that really did help. And so I fixed radios all the time I was in the army.
- Max Delsignore:* What was that education like for you? Working early on and heading into the army -
- Harold L'Huillier:* It was -
- Max Delsignore:* - and continuing that -
- Harold L'Huillier:* - very interesting. I really enjoyed it very much. The only thing I didn't enjoy was basic training. Throwing hand grenades, shooting 50 caliber guns and crawling under barbed wire with bullets flying over your head.
- Max Delsignore:* Well, what's that for you, psychologically? You know, being very young, in your 20s, early 20s, and -
- Harold L'Huillier:* It was -
- Max Delsignore:* - being drafted?
- Harold L'Huillier:* - well, I'd -
- Max Delsignore:* What's that experience?
- Harold L'Huillier:* - never been away from home before, and it was kind of scary. But you got used – you blended in and you got used to it, so it really didn't bother me much, and we got lots of time off, like we could go out at nights, get on a pass at weekends on a pass and in the little towns next door, we go have pizza and – and pizza. And we had a great time. And then they moved everybody from Fort – it was called Camp Gordon, we'd moved us up to Fort Monmouth, and we were there for six months and I got discharged. But they took the whole company and we drove our own cars up and of course I went with friends, I didn't have a car then, and we went back in the – fixing radios since right we got there.

It's like getting up – you get up at – regularly, because it – then you have to form formation, but then you have breakfast, then you go to work, come back, ever – have taps, go to bed. It was really something.

*Max Delsignore:* It's good that you never lost – there never was a break really in your education or love for radios, and getting a chance to kind of dabble in that. Where did that interest originally come from?

*Harold L'Huillier:* I don't know. I could tinker with things and fix them, and I thought radio, well, let's see, it's only a bunch of tubes in there. Supposing I take the tubes out, we could take them in – I forgot where you could take them, get them tested and see if they're any good, and replace the bad ones, give them back the radio. But a lot of times if it was a circuit problem then I wasn't too used to that. But tubes, yeah.

*Max Delsignore:* It was an easier job if it was just the tubes?

*Harold L'Huillier:* Same with television. When they first came out, they were all tubes. Last picture tube – well, actually, they started out with a metal picture tube, with high voltage around the middle, and you couldn't get anywhere near that thing. Especially with a part, I mean.

*Max Delsignore:* Sal, your folks had a furniture store, and what's interesting is the number of locations that they had. I mean you -

*Sally L'Huillier:* Well -

*Max Delsignore:* - really kind of spanned the North Country. What was it like for your parents having furniture stores across three counties?

*Sally L'Huillier:* Well, my father's father started it in [Inaudible: 0:11:09] New York, and then they eventually moved to Watertown and they did just have the one store. The building is still there, it's the corner of New in Mill Street, and -

*Harold L'Huillier:* It's a little stone building. It looks – got a stone front to it.

*Sally L'Huillier:* - my brother and I used to help them. My father paid us a penny for each -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Button you sold –

*Sally L'Huillier:* - button.

*Harold L'Huillier:* - on the mattress.

*Sally L'Huillier:* Yeah. They had a piece of twine with the – attached to the button, and those went in the mattresses and so we got paid a penny for each button that we put the twine through, and so we were always – spent a lot of time at the store, and then yes, eventually they expanded to other cities in Northern New York. It was Watertown, Potsdam, Lowville Gouverneur, and Carthage, and that's where I spent a lot of time. But then my father was asked to join in Faichney Instrument and they made clinical glass thermometer. During the war it was a big thing. They were awarded all kinds of army and navy excellence awards. When I graduated from high school, my father was at Faichney's, I went to college for a year and I came back and I went to the Watertown School of Commerce for two years.

I was always interested in office work, typing shorthand, business and so I took the two year course for accounting at the Watertown School of Commerce, and then I was supposed to go for an interview at a place, but my father wanted me to work for him. So I worked at Faichney's until I was married and around until I had our first child, Brian. And then I stopped – well, I did some – still did some homework for them. But that was my story. When I was working I did – well, all the time I didn't have much money but there would be different local organizations that I would donate to, and they were local ones and ones I believed in, and so I did used to do that, but I didn't have much money then, so it wasn't a lot.

But I did keep it up and I hope I've been a help.

*Max Delsignore:* Why did you feel compelled to give at that time?

*Sally L'Huillier:* I just wanted to. I know some of the animal organizations, I love animals and I like the local – like the local SPCA, the local Salvation Army, the DPAO. I just felt better if I could help somebody that needed some help, and so I just felt better when I could help somebody. And then when we lost our son to a drunk driver, and he had been passed – a commander, the son's legion for a few years and they had always wanted to start a scholarship fund for families of sons of legion members and family. When we lost him we asked instead of flowers if people would like to donate money to help start a scholarship fund for the son's legion family members, and that's how that got started.

And Brian loved teaching at BOCES, and I had always thought highly of BOCES because people were able to learn trades there and they had a lot of very good courses there that I – so we started a scholarship fund there to help anybody that wanted to go and didn't have the money to go.

*Harold L'Huillier:* It's still going.

*Sally L'Huillier:* And -

*Harold L'Huillier:* It's still going.

*Sally L'Huillier:* - at the same time we received an insurance check from the driver of the car that our son was in when he was killed, and we decided to invest that and take the interest every year and donate it to a local charity. And we picked DPAO because we knew Joe Rich, and we knew – he's worked hard all his life for them and we wanted to do that. So every year we take the interest from it and donate it to him, and then a little bit later we were fortunate to meet Rande Richardson, of the Northern New York Community Foundation, and Brian's scholarships are now endowed there, so we know they'll go in perpetuity. And Rande always – also helped us to realize about local organizations and local funds that would help people, and that's what we – I enjoy anyway mostly, doing local – helping local people.

And there's so many people out of work and so many homeless people that – and the Bridge program, Urban Mission, has helped a great deal with that, and I donate a lot of clothes to them and we took all of Brian's – Brian had a lot of nice winter jackets, and we donated those to Urban Mission for people that couldn't afford jackets. So that's -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah. What's it – Urban Mission's other – the name is?

*Sally L'Huillier:* The Bridge program.

*Harold L'Huillier:* No, where they buy the stuff from the -

*Sally L'Huillier:* Oh, the store?

*Rande Richardson:* Impossible Dream.

*Harold L'Huillier:* The store. What is it?

*Rande Richardson:* The Impossible Dream.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Impossible Dream.

*Sally L'Huillier:* That's right.

*Harold L'Huillier:* I remember taking clothes in the Impossible Dream too, and they were glad to get them. But I don't know, we've always wanted to donate to people that needed it, and I don't – I'm not one to donate to national organizations, especially the ones who call you on the phone all the time. You send them – us some money, and next thing you know you've got a letter in the mail wanting more. So we've said oh, I guess they were happy with that, so we'll just stick – we'll stick to home.

*Rande Richardson:* In that respect, Harold and Sally, I want to ask you a question related to that. When you give to an organization and you make a decision to give, what are your expectations on the part of that organization in terms of what you need to know from them as far as whether you would consider giving again, or that you felt good about the gift that you gave?

*Harold L'Huillier:* Well, we make sure they help other people with the money we donate to them. And we get information from a certain man who's sitting right there, making sure we give to the right ones and once it – he knows they're going to use it the right way and not these national organizations who use it for parties and advertising and all this other thing. That's why I don't like to give it to national.

*Sally L'Huillier:* And they bombard you in the mail -

*Harold L'Huillier:* And they bombard you in the mail -

*Sally L'Huillier:* - with tons of mail.

*Harold L'Huillier:* - and the phone.

*Sally L'Huillier:* Phone calls.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah.

*Sally L'Huillier:* No, you can tell most of the local organizations, even by just reading a paper, when they put on different -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Fundraisers?

*Sally L'Huillier:* - fundraiser, different – like they'll – the Salvation Army puts up different breakfasts for people and you can see different things that go on, and well, and with the Bridge program we donate to that every year because they're trying to help – we've actually seen results there, where they try to help people with their addictions. And – but I think you can tell pretty much with the local ones when you see different things that they're doing, I think you kind of know that they're using your money the way you want them to.

*Max Delsignore:* How has philanthropy in the way that you've given back directly impacted the North Country? And how do you feel that giving makes the North Country more vibrant as a whole?

*Harold L'Huillier:* I don't know, it makes you feel good, for one thing. And it feels good to be able to do it, and knowing that you're helping other people, it's really something. We've got so many different charities that we donate to, but we've been cutting back on the nationals and going more for the local. And I think keeping everybody at home is a lot more important. Of course there are some national charities that really do use the money the way they'd like, but it's far and few between.

*Sally L'Huillier:* Tell them about Best Friends.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Oh, yeah. There is an organization out, it's Utah.

*Sally L'Huillier:* Utah. Best Friends Animal Sanctuary.

*Harold L'Huillier:* It's got – they have 30,000 acres and have – they take care of all these different kinds of animals. They rescue them and they find homes for them, they have veterinarians there. We were out there one time when we visited friends. It's the most wonderful place I ever saw, and we donate to them every year, and they don't bug us for money.

*Sally L'Huillier:* No.

*Harold L'Huillier:* No.

*Max Delsignore:* Well, there's clearly a trigger there with the organizations you've helped before. There's something there that inspires you to demonstrate your support. What are some of the triggers, or what are the things that you see that has inspired you to give the way that you have?

*Harold L'Huillier:* Well, some that – you see the results of what they do. Like SPCA, they're doing a pretty good job with their animals there. Oh, and the Salvation Army. I don't know, I've always donated to them. Because I figure they're there to help people, and they sure do a lot for them. It's a semi-religious thing, but it's – they do it out of work for other people, and that's what I like to see. Who else do we give to that's -

*Sally L'Huillier:* A lot of local -

*Harold L'Huillier:* I know, I – oh. Well, we give to the Historical Society, trying to keep them afloat. But -

*Sally L'Huillier:* The library.

*Harold L'Huillier:* The library -

*Sally L'Huillier:* The flower library.

*Harold L'Huillier:* - oh, we donate hundreds of books a crack. They come up with their trucks sometimes to pick them up. My wife has quite a collection.

*Max Delsignore:* I think what's interesting too with the two of you is you have – you've always had those values of giving back kind of within you. Now that you've been on this journey together for 58 years, that you've done a lot of this giving together too, and I feel like it seems as if it's more impactful.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah.

*Max Delsignore:* How did the two of you meet?

*Harold L'Huillier:* Oh, well, I -

*Max Delsignore:* Can you share that story?

*Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah, I was in a vending business for about a year, and after my – the fellow I used to work for, Fred Sheeran died, the business kind of folded and these other people asked me to work on their vending machines and they sent me to school for it. So I went and did that, and I came back and was working at – they had me delivering – you had to service machines. They were coffee, strictly coffee machines. They had cream sugar and water and coffee, liquid coffee, they were all in this refrigerated unit. So when you put the money in it would drop a cup of coffee and you'd be all set for you

to eat – drink. One of the places I – I did a lot of paper mills, because they had them in a lot of paper mills.

But Faichney instrument was one of them. They had one up in there, a rec room, and I had to go there every morning to service it because you can't have sour cream in it. So I see her sitting at the front desk. She was – to greet people, and she was also secretary there too. So once in a while she'd come up and have a coffee while I was there and then she kept coming up every time I was there and I said, 'Well, that's nice, she's a cute little girl.' And she volunteered for the church, Holy Family, and they want her to do a survey on Catholic parishioners and get their feeling about church, I guess that's what it was about. And she brought along her girl friend when she came to my house on Winslow Street in Watertown.

I said, 'Wow, I wonder which one is after me.' I said, 'I know it's one of them.' So one day I was out front washing my car, you could wash them out in the street in those days, and she come flying by in her automobile, and I said, 'Wow, I wonder what she's up to.' So I got in my car and took off after her. We wound up on the Black River Road near the old Dog House. It's a -

*Sally L'Huillier:* Hotdog stand.

*Harold L'Huillier:* - hotdog stand, coffee and stuff, and we got out of the cars and we were talking and she says – I asked her, I says, 'How would you like to go for coffee?' So we went over to the Dog House, had coffee and it went from there to the movies and then to dinners, and then to church.

*Sally L'Huillier:* Well -

*Harold L'Huillier:* The altar.

*Sally L'Huillier:* - we went together for two years, so -

*Harold L'Huillier:* We went together for two years -

*Sally L'Huillier:* - before that.

*Harold L'Huillier:* - so – in those days you had to do what the church wants you to do, as far as – what are they called? Bands and marriage.

*Sally L'Huillier:* Bands and marriage.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah. That kept you away for a while.

*Sally L'Huillier:* Well, we used to go to dinner a lot, though.

*Harold L'Huillier:* We did a lot, and we did it – we went out to dinner a lot. Of course, in those days you had restaurants everywhere and they were all good too. And so – and we went to the movies a lot. We used to go to the drive-in. I had this car that was an ambassador special. It had three different colors. It had a continental on the back. Well, we'd go to the drive-in and the seats fold back into like – all flat across. So we'd sit in the backseat looking at the movies, we'd bring our own popcorn and soda.

*Max Delsignore:* So Sally, are all these stories true?

*Sally L'Huillier:* Yes.

*Max Delsignore:* Okay. I just want to confirm those for the record.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Oh yeah -

*Sally L'Huillier:* Yeah.

*Harold L'Huillier:* - we had a lot of fun. Of course in those days we didn't drink much, did we?

*Sally L'Huillier:* No.

*Harold L'Huillier:* I don't think we were -

*Sally L'Huillier:* I – I never -

*Harold L'Huillier:* - of course, we were in our 20s.

*Sally L'Huillier:* - I never did much.

*Max Delsignore:* One thing you noted though in that era of time, and there are few of them today, are the family restaurants. You know -

*Sally L'Huillier:* Yes.

*Max Delsignore:* - local institutions run by -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah.

*Max Delsignore:* - local families.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Morgia's was one of them. That was a terrific movie – restaurant. We went to a lot of places together, and then we went with friends. We had a lot of friends in the 50s, and we all used to hang out together sometimes, and one couple, we went to Massena to see the Eisenhower Lock up there. It was built in our 50 – in the 50s when we were going together. So yeah, we got married in 58. It was 58, yeah? And it was quite a time out there. I love the 50s. The 60s it started going downhill.

*Max Delsignore:* Well, during the period of time after you were married, you worked together at Cole TV.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah, she did, she -

*Max Delsignore:* So where – where was the shop located?

*Harold L'Huillier:* Well, it started on 451 Arsenal Street, and it's still there, the old brick building on the corner of Meadow and Arsenal. We ran the store on the left hand side. We were only there a year, I wasn't making the money to pay the rent, so we put the shop in our cellar in Pearl Avenue. We had a house there that we bought from her father, and so we had the shop in there. I'd work seven days a week, nights and everything down there, fixing radios. And I'm fixing – yeah -

*Sally L'Huillier:* TVs, mostly.

*Harold L'Huillier:* - fixing televisions too. Yeah. We used to get televisions from her first father's furniture store. They bring them down from Governor, all over the – to be fixed. We had a side door on the driveway, bring them downstairs, fix them. Neighbors complained about the business being in the house, so we had to move it, so I went to Glen Park with it and I had it for two or three years there. And Neil Butler had a furniture store on State Street, and I used to fix his televisions, because he was selling them, and one day he comes to me – came to me and he said, 'You know, I want to go out of business and retire,' and he says, 'How would you like to buy my building?' So I bought his building. I got a good deal on it and I had it for 19 years, I think, and finally – I got tired of the business.

I got burned out, really, and I retired and I rented it out. I made more money renting it out than I made in the business.

*Sally L'Huillier:* Well, that was when all the big box stores came -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah. The -

*Sally L'Huillier:* - and it was hard competing.

*Harold L'Huillier:* - competition was tough. Even competing with just repairmen, there were so many of them around, and with the sales, it just didn't make stats anymore, so -

*Max Delsignore:* Elaborate on that a little bit, for the younger audience it may not understand the era of time when customers or business would come and approach you. How did you market yourself, how did those folks come to get their items, their TVs and radios fixed by you?

*Harold L'Huillier:* Well, they come in the door. We did some advertising, Yellow Pages, and -

*Sally L'Huillier:* Newspaper.

*Harold L'Huillier:* - oh, newspaper, and I remember – what was his name that used to be on the radio? He came in store and we would do a commercial with him. He lived on Flyer in the West.

*Rande Richardson:* Ward Hamilton. Ward Hamilton.

*Sally L'Huillier:* Ward Hamilton?

*Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah – yeah – it was – was Ward Hamilton.

*Sally L'Huillier:* Oh, was it – was it?

*Harold L'Huillier:* No. He's like Danny Burgess, only the other guy. Well, anyway, yeah, we did advertising to get people out, and two weeks before Christmas every year we had a truck load sale out in front. We put a whole big – one of these – Young's Trucking truck right in front, where the doors open, whole bunch of boxes in there, and of course they're all empty, but we couldn't have people stealing them. And we sell the most TVs we ever sell in those two weeks.

*Max Delsignore:* So it's kind of your version of Black Friday?

*Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah.

*Max Delsignore:* Or what it is today, I guess -

- Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah, yeah. We started something I think, because then the other people started having truck sales and so after a while we quit having them, because they weren't doing that well anymore, and the business was just getting tired, I guess. And so was I.
- Max Delsignore:* How was it different to – because I would imagine a lot of local businesses saw that same kind of change, where larger companies are coming in, they're moving into the plazas where Arsenal Street began -
- Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah, a lot of -
- Max Delsignore:* - to develop.
- Harold L'Huillier:* - discount stores were starting up and they could sell them for less than I could. But they – of course, they didn't have free service for their first 90 days either.
- Max Delsignore:* Right.
- Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah. We took – we took real good care of our customers, though, because they came back with their sons and daughters to buy them on, or relatives come buy TV. I think -
- Sally L'Huillier:* He was surprised, one of them was Abbey Hoffman.
- Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah, yeah -
- Sally L'Huillier:* Who was here as Barry Freid those days.
- Harold L'Huillier:* And his girlfriend, Kate Lawrence, Phil, or Lawrence something?
- Sally L'Huillier:* Joanna Lawrenceson.
- Harold L'Huillier:* Lawrenceson. She came in the store one day and wanted – picked out a television, and I delivered it to Fineview, of course they had to come all the way down these stairs toward the water when that thing was heavy. Oh, man, and we sat there waiting for her to come back. She was supposed to come back to pay us, and we didn't – I wasn't going to leave her without getting paid but I had to, because I couldn't get it back up the stairs. And we were sitting there having a beer with – with Barry Freed. After we left I said, 'You know, that guy looks familiar.'
- Max Delsignore:* Seen him somewhere before.

*Sally L'Huillier:* Yeah.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah. He was a nice guy, really. We had a great talk, we had a good time with him. Yeah.

*Max Delsignore:* Jumping back to – I should say really jumping ahead to today, and given the way in which you've given to local organizations, or to causes that you believe in, what would you say to someone who has interest in giving back but they really haven't done it before, they haven't demonstrated that, and they're having a tough time getting past that hurdle, and doing something on their own. What would you say to encourage that person to -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Well -

*Max Delsignore:* - get them to give back?

*Sally L'Huillier:* To talk to Rande.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Well, actually start small. Pick the people that you know that you like, and have heard about what they do, go see them. See what their needs are, and volunteer the money then.

*Max Delsignore:* Sally, have you and Harold done that before? Gone to visit the agent -

*Harold L'Huillier:* We've been to -

*Max Delsignore:* - agency directly just to say is there anything in particular we could help with?

*Harold L'Huillier:* Well, we've been to just about all of them, but we didn't talk money with them.

*Max Delsignore:* No?

*Harold L'Huillier:* SPCA, we picked up a cat there one time, or two, and all the Historical Society. We -

*Sally L'Huillier:* Urban Mission.

*Harold L'Huillier:* - Urban Mission, we really like Urban Mission. And we like the Bridge program with the Sam, is it? Saul.

*Sally L'Huillier:* Saul.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah, Saul, who's a great -

*Sally L'Huillier:* Or Sal. But he's leaving and they're going to have one more – they call it victims panel in November, and we're going to go to that because it'll be his last one.

*Harold L'Huillier:* It's great to donate to a – a place like that, because you know it's really helping people. And it might get them started on their own some day.

*Sally L'Huillier:* And we help with the Run for Recovery every year too. We -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah, we donate to that. We're -

*Sally L'Huillier:* - we help sponsor it.

*Harold L'Huillier:* - one of the big sponsors for it.

*Max Delsignore:* What has that experience with the Bridge program, that component of the Urban Mission meant to the two of you?

*Harold L'Huillier:* Great. Really great, because our son was killed by a drunk driver, and we know that they want to prevent as many as they can from doing the same thing. But they also help the people that are already in – have had the accidents to see their ways and stay – and change, and a lot of them are – they get up and speak before you and you know very well that they've been helped a lot.

*Sally L'Huillier:* We try to tell what it's been like when it happened, and I know the last time that I talked there, I didn't tell the whole story of an episode and I feel I should have. I didn't know if it might help somebody, but at the same time when I was talking I don't know, I guess I felt it might not be appropriate, but there was an accident on a Superbowl weekend and it was just down the road from our home and car crashed into a tree and killed the man that was in it, and they think he had been out celebrating and the next day we walked – we rolled by and we saw family members there sorting through all the debris -

*Harold L'Huillier:* What was there -

*Sally L'Huillier:* - on the ground trying to find things that had belonged to -

*Harold L'Huillier:* It's the same thing we did when we went to Brian's scene, his accident scene.

*Sally L'Huillier:* And we had done that and I found his American Legion card and other mementos. But at that one accident we found out the man had been decapitated and I didn't say that at the victim's panel and I don't know, the more I think about it I kind of wish I had, because maybe that would have more of an impact on somebody -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah.

*Sally L'Huillier:* - maybe not. I don't know. But I thought, you know, if I speak again maybe I -

*Harold L'Huillier:* We went to our son's crash scene too, chicken wings all over, because they were going to a party and they went outside - they flew out of the car with him, he was holding them. And I saw chicken wings all over the place, and some of - in - you said what card was it? His driver -

*Sally L'Huillier:* His Legion card -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Legion card.

*Sally L'Huillier:* - other things, I can't remember if it was his -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah, I tell you, that was tough

*Sally L'Huillier:* - wallet. And also we heard that the Brownville Fire Department tried to help, but their first responders had tried - worked a long time on our son, and so every year I donate to the first responders, because I always thought -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Brownville Fire Department.

*Sally L'Huillier:* - and to the Brownville Fire Department, but also to the first responders because they did try awfully hard to -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Glen Park Fire Department. The Smithsville Fire Department, Cape Vincent Fire Department. Did I miss one?

*Sally L'Huillier:* No. I don't think so.

*Harold L'Huillier:* But all the ones that are - well, actually, the Smithsville is -

*Sally L'Huillier:* Yeah, tell him your story there. He won some money there.

*Harold L'Huillier:* I was there - we used to go there with our daughter, they had this drawing and you have a chance to win 10,000 dollars. And each

ticket cost 100 dollars, and so I picked a ticket and I won 100 dollars the first time I was there. But then I kept – I didn't go back too much. My daughter took our – put the money in for our number, and one time she called me up on the phone, she says, 'Well, I've got something here for you. I think you won something.' She brings over a bag of money, 10,000 dollars I won.

*Max Delsignore:* Oh wow.

*Harold L'Huillier:* First time I ever won anything in my life. So we sent 500 back to the fire department from it -

*Sally L'Huillier:* And they were shocked, because they said nobody that had won their raffle ever.

*Harold L'Huillier:* - sent it back, any money. So now we sent them the 500 dollars. They're getting their money back, one way or another.

*Max Delsignore:* How does the loss of a loved one, how did that impact the way you give?

*Harold L'Huillier:* Well, it changed our lives forever. We just – you don't do the happy things you used to do all the time. And he used to fix everything in the house. He could do anything, and we miss that a lot and of course miss him being there, and he was just a great guy.

*Sally L'Huillier:* He could do plumbing, heating, electrical -

*Harold L'Huillier:* He done anything you wanted to do.

*Sally L'Huillier:* - automotive, anything.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Handy. Oh, was he ever handy.

*Sally L'Huillier:* So we -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Well, we miss that.

*Sally L'Huillier:* - had to start hiring people.

*Harold L'Huillier:* The fact that somebody could watch the house while we're not there, yeah.

*Sally L'Huillier:* And during the -

*Harold L'Huillier:* The ice storm -

*Sally L'Huillier:* - what was it? Oh, ice storm -

*Harold L'Huillier:* - of – that was the -

*Sally L'Huillier:* He had – he had – he was there alone because we were in Florida with my mother

*Harold L'Huillier:* That went on for a long time, before I got electricity back. He borrowed a generator and he used it part time and gave it back to him, I think it was our nephew, wasn't it?

*Sally L'Huillier:* Yeah.

*Harold L'Huillier:* And it – just to keep the refrigerators going and the heat going, and he'd come back and pick it up, take it to his house, do the same thing. So they were trading – just trading this generator back and forth to keep the house from freezing and everything in the refrigerator. But we got home and stuff in the refrigerator wasn't too good.

*Sally L'Huillier:* Well, it wasn't only that. He went around to all the country roads -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Ah, collecting things -

*Sally L'Huillier:* - and he'd see downed -

*Harold L'Huillier:* - that fell off the plates.

*Sally L'Huillier:* - telephone poles and he'd collect -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Insulator.

*Sally L'Huillier:* - the insulators off all the poles. When we came home, we could hardly get in the front door because the floors were covered with these insulators. But he enjoyed that. We still have the insulators.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Not all of them. I called Ni-Mo and had him come and get some of them. It was Ni-Mo then, yeah.

*Sally L'Huillier:* Well, he had big – one of those.

*Harold L'Huillier:* He had a transformer, it came off a pole. They wanted that back.

*Max Delsignore:* That'd be cool, to hang on to that in the house.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Oh, I don't know how he got – he had a little workshop across the road and I said I wonder – he showed it to me one time, I said, 'Well, how did you get that in there? It must weigh 500 pounds.' He says, 'Like this.' He points to his head, and I says, 'Well –' we didn't want it in there because it was full of that oil and everything, and we called Ni-Mo, and they came and they had a dumpster to put all the other stuff in there. There was so much stuff to be collected, and they took that and they picked up the transformer themselves and put it in the back of a truck and took it.

*Max Delsignore:* Wow.

*Harold L'Huillier:* But all that stuff was going to another foreign country, because they weren't going to reuse it. Yeah.

*Rande Richardson:* There's a theme that comes out when I listen to you, and I also know from knowing you personally that family has always been a very important part of your life -

*Sally L'Huillier:* Yes.

*Rande Richardson:* - family celebrations, time together with family. How much do you view and in what ways do you view the things that you do now philanthropically and giving back as an extension of either your family or as a way to honor their legacy, and where do you see that going when you're no longer here?

*Harold L'Huillier:* Well, we used to have – we used to throw a lot of parties at our house for people, and they'd come and enjoy the – I used to have a big game room on the back of the house. Well, it's still there, but it's full of other stuff, and we had shuffle board, draft beer, jukebox. Family and friends would all come over and just like having a bar really, you'd pour yourself a beer and enjoy yourself. But a lot of times we'd have parties outdoors for different events, like -

*Sally L'Huillier:* The graduation -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Graduation. We had a big graduation party, and we had Labor Day, July Fourth, all these times, all these holidays we had parties, friends, neighbors, and relatives. And we'd all get together and have a great time.

*Sally L'Huillier:* And we still get together -

*Harold L'Huillier:* We still get together, yeah.

*Sally L'Huillier:* - a little bit, for holidays. You know, I mean if we see there's something that we can do to help other families keep together, and get together, we try to do what we can to help them do that, because I think family is important. I've seen some families where they don't treat the children right and things are, um, aren't that good. So if we can do anything to help families get along better, you know, we'd do what we could to help.

*Rande Richardson:* How do we make sure that the people listening to this, whether they be high school students or college students or whomever, how do we ensure that they follow your lead, that they continue to do the things that you have found a way to do? What would you say to them, if they were in this room today what would you say to them?

*Harold L'Huillier:* Well, things are much different than they were then. They have to be – it has to be handed down somehow, because -

*Rande Richardson:* How do we do that?

*Harold L'Huillier:* Well, have experience that their parents have, you know, experience and show them how their quality of life should – if – should help their children have the same quality of life. But nowadays they don't do that. They just let the kids run on their own. There's hardly any discipline. That's another thing that – we were discipline when we screwed up.

*Sally L'Huillier:* That's right.

*Harold L'Huillier:* And they didn't bash our head or anything, but they'd tell you what you weren't going to do the next day that you wanted to do. Or they took your allowance away for a week, or something like that. But you don't hit them, and -

*Rande Richardson:* What would you want those people to learn from what you've done? It's become part of your life to help others.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah.

*Rande Richardson:* What would you say to these young folks that – what it's meant to you, how it's changed your life?

*Harold L'Huillier:* Well, I don't know. We feel very happy in our shoes.

*Sally L'Huillier:* I do have family that I think they were not brought up the best way. I think they were give me what I can get. I have seen a lot of

that first hand, and I know it goes back to the mother, in one instance it's the mother, but sometimes it's the parents that don't seem to care what happens with their children. I just think it's important to show people that family is very important, you can usually rely on your family.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Show them love and respect.

*Sally L'Huillier:* And discipline, the ones I'm thinking of were not disciplined well. And -

*Harold L'Huillier:* That's the trouble today.

*Sally L'Huillier:* - so you know, if we could tell them, you know, when you have a family of your own children love respect, discipline, and to help other people when you see they need help. Don't just walk by. I've seen videos of - where somebody will fall down and people just walk over them and don't pay any attention, and don't even try to help them. I don't understand that. If I see somebody struggling or trying to do something and they're having problems, I would jump out and help them.

*Harold L'Huillier:* I remember when I was a kid helping an old lady cross the street, this was in the winter time and she was out shopping, and I wanted to make sure she got across the street alright. I must have been about 12, 13 at the time. Yeah, I said, you know, this poor old lady, some day I'm going to be her age, and I might need help too. And I just felt sorry for her. She didn't have anybody with her and I helped her across. You can't ignore people if they're in trouble. You just can't do that.

*Sally L'Huillier:* And on the way over here today there was a girl on a bicycle, and she was trying to get through traffic and this one car, and nobody would help her, and we were back too far to be able to help her, but this one car, she finally got up to the curb where she could turn right, and as she was turning right this one car went through the light and started to turn her way, and she came awful close to getting hit. The car just went on its way, but you see an awful lot of that now -

*Harold L'Huillier:* We see a lot of -

*Sally L'Huillier:* - people don't care -

*Harold L'Huillier:* - people going through red lights, because they don't care.

*Sally L'Huillier:* No, they don't care, and we see it all the time going to Cape Vincent. Especially through Chaumont -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Oh, the worst drivers are -

*Sally L'Huillier:* - and Point Peninsula. They will – they -

*Harold L'Huillier:* From North Point Peninsula -

*Sally L'Huillier:* - do not believe in -

*Harold L'Huillier:* - you don't believe in stopping.

*Sally L'Huillier:* No, and you're taking your life in your hands when you get in that area, but it seems to be -

*Harold L'Huillier:* I've seen it happen a lot.

*Sally L'Huillier:* - everywhere now. More and more.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah.

*Sally L'Huillier:* But -

*Harold L'Huillier:* People just don't have any feeling for other people -

*Sally L'Huillier:* No, they don't seem to -

*Harold L'Huillier:* - anymore. They're a lot colder, they're not warm like back in the day, where people cared about other people. But it seems like today they don't care about anybody else but themselves. Yeah, they're very selfish, rude. We've seen a lot.

*Max Delsignore:* Well, and thinking about the future of the area, philanthropy has really played an integral part in the development and growth of our community over time. You know, all the areas that you've touched on really in our conversation. How important is philanthropy and its place in the community, how important is it to the future of the North Country?

*Harold L'Huillier:* I think it's very important.

*Sally L'Huillier:* Yes, I do too.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Because you can't – a lot of – like things they want to start up, you can't just go out and get money off the street. Somebody's got to

help you. Fundraiser's still fine but sometimes you don't get enough for what you need, and philanthropy can help you there. But I think that's one of the best things in this country, is philanthropy. There is a lot of it in this area. Because I know of a lot of people that are philanthropists here. They've helped build hospitals and libraries and everything.

*Rande Richardson:* That word sometimes scares people, that word philanthropist. It sounds like you have to be a Carnegie or Rockefeller to be able to – can you talk a little bit about philanthropy in terms of – in its most pure form? Basically the way you've lived your life. I mean, philanthropy, in other words, your interpretation of that. What does the word mean to you?

*Sally L'Huillier:* When I was working, I mean I could only donate small amounts, but I felt I was helping. Back in those days it was probably considered a fair amount. But you know, anything I could I just felt better when I donated, even though it wasn't much.

*Harold L'Huillier:* I remember we started out in church, donating to the church. Then we donated to the March of Dimes, and then we donated to -

*Sally L'Huillier:* United Way and different things.

*Harold L'Huillier:* And I – yeah, well I don't anymore, but -

*Sally L'Huillier:* No.

*Harold L'Huillier:* - we did, and we – and Joe gave to Salvation Army, and especially the drum – the kettles.

*Sally L'Huillier:* Oh, we do that all the time.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah, I'll pull out a bunch of money and put it – every time – every store I went – they had them out there. But we sent them a check too once. I just like to keep those people happy.

*Sally L'Huillier:* And I don't like to hear people complain about their -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Bell.

*Sally L'Huillier:* The bell or whatever, I mean these -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Now stores want them out front.

- Sally L'Huillier:* But these people are standing out there in the freezing cold trying to raise a little bit of money -
- Harold L'Huillier:* They're helping people that need help. So that's what I like.
- Rande Richardson:* You've been doing – giving for a long time, and then you know, recently discovered the Community Foundation a little more and got to know us a little more, and we you. Where has that fit in your philanthropy and how has that helped you?
- Sally L'Huillier:* Oh my gosh, tremendously. Our son's scholarships were just sitting in a bank earning nothing, and we kept after our daughter to – because she was -
- Harold L'Huillier:* She was in her account.
- Sally L'Huillier:* - taking – she was in charge of it, and just trying to get her to, you know, do something with it and try to get it to the Community Foundation, where it would be in perpetuity, it was a chore but we did finally get it there and it just makes me feel great that I know it's always going to be there, and will always help somebody, both the scholarships and to me it's helped with a lot of the other organizations to know which ones need more help. You know, where we can help the best. I think it's really very important.
- Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah. We like the animal rescue people.
- Sally L'Huillier:* Yeah.
- Harold L'Huillier:* Because I don't know, we just love animals. And of course, then we do the ones that like people, and we give them more.
- Sally L'Huillier:* Oh yeah.
- Harold L'Huillier:* It's been quite an experience in our lives, to be able to do what we're doing.
- Sally L'Huillier:* Oh yes.
- Harold L'Huillier:* Because we started with scratch and now we're pretty good.
- Rande Richardson:* How important is it to you to know that the things that you care about now can be – that can go on when you're not able to do it yourselves?
- Sally L'Huillier:* It's a great relief, to me.

*Harold L'Huillier:* What's that?

*Sally L'Huillier:* A great relief to know that Brian's scholarships will be carried on -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Oh, yes. There's more organization to it.

*Rande Richardson:* Any other things that you really care about can still be supported?

*Harold L'Huillier:* It makes money for itself and it's – it's being supported by other income from it. So we're able to give scholarships out to more people this way.

*Sally L'Huillier:* Help more people.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Yeah.

*Rande Richardson:* I was asked this question, of all the folks that we've talked to and I think it's important and don't be humble when I ask this question, but both of you answer this individually. How do you want to be remembered?

*Harold L'Huillier:* Do I need to be remembered?

*Sally L'Huillier:* I don't know if I -

*Rande Richardson:* Okay, let me ask a different question then. If I was to ask you to fill in this – the blanks of this question, three words, Sally L'Huillier is. Harold, is? These three things, how would you answer that question about yourself?

*Sally L'Huillier:* In three words?

*Rande Richardson:* Take your time.

*Sally L'Huillier:* Well, giving, helping -

*Harold L'Huillier:* Friendly, loving.

*Sally L'Huillier:* - loving.

*Harold L'Huillier:* Considerate.

*Rande Richardson:* Well, I'd say that's how you want to be remembered and I think you -

*Sally L'Huillier:* Respectful.

*Rande Richardson:* - yeah.

*Max Delsignore:* Well, your story's a perfect example of how anyone with the heart to give can make a difference in any community, and we hope the listeners can take away a lesson or two from what you've shared and apply it to their lives. So Harold and Sally, we appreciate your time and your story and being on the podcast with us.

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Northern New York Community Podcast. Stories from the heart of our community.

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