Kiwi caretaker has Heart of Gold

By Andrew Stuckey May 3 1999

It's one thing to be loved and revered in your own town. It's quite another when you can call three different communities home.

Trevor Hamon is a village institution in Glenwood. Besides serving as its fire chief for seven years and taking care of its school for over eight years, Hamon has also been Glenwood's resident "neighbor" for as long as anyone can remember.

But Hamon hasn't limited his activities to the village. He is a welcome sight to many families on the neighboring Blood Reserve and has ties to a nearby Hutterite colony.

"We have a lot of good friends on the Reserve and in the colony," Hamon said. "We get invited to their Christmas programs and weddings. Whenever we go out to the colony we're always invited to the dining room. We just have really good friends there."

Hamon said service is the key to the many friendships he has developed in all three communities.

"When you love people, when they learn you truly love them, they'll love you back. One of the problems we've got in the world today is people are afraid to say hello to anyone. You meet a stranger and that's what they remain.

"We lose a lot of wonderful opportunities of sharing our love. Just because people are not from our family or our community or our religion we tend to ostracize them."

Although Hamon is hesitant to talk about his involvement with others, his second wife, Marlene, is quick to fill in the facts.

"I get my attitudes and feelings from my parents," said Hamon, "who always taught us don't let your right hand know what your left is doing."

His wife interpreted. "He means he doesn't like to let people know what he's done," she said.

She recalled a morning Hamon was up early doing some gardening for an elderly couple unable to do the work themselves.

After cleaning up their flowerbed, Hamon realized several plants needed watering. He suggested to the couple they water the plants, only to have them respond it was of no use doing that until the flowerbed was weeded.

"I think it was three days before she discovered the garden," Mrs. Hamon said.

Another time shortly after their marriage, Hamon came home for lunch and found a crock of soup prepared by his wife. After having a bowl he remarked to her how good it was and took the crock down to a construction crew at the local school.

"At the time I thought he didn't like my soup and was getting rid of it," she said. "But I soon learned Trevor isn't like that. He really thought the soup was good and wanted to share it."

"Hey, it was cold, they were cold, it was cold work and here was some nice hot soup," Hamon responded.

"Hamon has considerable gardening in his own yard and had his efforts rewarded when the yard was named "most improved" by the village. Despite the many hours he labors over his own garden there is still time to keep the "roto-tiller going full speed on the Reserve."

Hamon raises cuttings and perennial plants in his yard and transplants them to homes on the Reserve.

"Basically I'm just trying to help them beautify their homes," he said.

Hamon's latest concern on the Reserve was made possible with the assistance of a fellow Glenwood golden heart Grant Paxman, who owns a potato farm.

Hamon was visiting the farm one day and noticed a fair number of potatoes strewn across the field. He asked Paxman about them and was told they were too large to sell and "What if I had some people come out and collect them?" Hamon asked.

It sounded like a good idea to Paxman and shortly pick-up trucks from the Reserve were leaving the Paxman farm laden down with potatoes.

"I talked to one man who had taken quite a truckload," said Hamon. "I said to him, 'those should keep you going for awhile.' But he shook his head and said they weren't all for him.

"I'm gonna do what you do. I'm gonna help my brother," Hamon said the man responded.

"You know Grant could have charged them a dollar a bag but he didn't," Hamon said of the project.

"And the only reason he hasn't dumped them all out now is because he still has people coming."

Hamon said his Maori background probably gives him a better understanding of Canada's native people. "I think they know I understand them and are more accepting of me because of it," he said.

As caretaker at the Glenwood School Hamon has endeared himself to both the children and the teachers. He will retire from that position in June, something his wife said he isn't looking forward to.

"The closer it gets to June the more he's missing the children," she said. "We have children coming here now and telling him to come back and visit."

The teachers said they will miss their prank-playing caretaker when he leaves as well.

Boyd Sommerfeld, himself nominated for a Heart of Gold award, added his own comments to Hamon's nomination.

"When you work beside someone for several years, you get the whole picture of the man. (He can't put on airs for eight years.)"

"He has treated the staff here at school with south seas island food, played tricks on students and staff, and always provided us with comedy when we arrive to begin work."

Five other employees at the school added their own recommendations to Hamon's nomination, including his "neighbor" Trevor Hamon.