

Love Our Teachers: How Communities Can Step Up for Teachers (and Why That's Never Been More Important)

Janet Pilcher and Quint Studer offer practical ways to get involved in a "Love Our Teachers" movement.

PENSACOLA, FL, UNITED STATES, August 14, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Teachers are instrumental in shaping children's future—but the past few years have been challenging. In the wake of the pandemic, educators navigated academic setbacks, social and emotional challenges among students, shrinking resources, and mounting public pressure. They could use their communities' support, say Janet K. Pilcher and Quint Studer—not just appreciation, but real action.

"Educating our kids has always been a community-wide responsibility," says Pilcher, coauthor along with Studer of the new book *The Extraordinary Gift: Our Teachers* (Studer Education, 2025, ISBN: 978-1-7371170-2-5, \$19.95). "If we don't do our part, we risk losing talented educators who are vital to our schools and our children's success. It's time for all of us—parents, neighbors, and community leaders—to rethink how we show up for our teachers and find new ways to recognize and support them."

Lifting up teachers is why Pilcher and Studer—both of whom have backgrounds in education—wrote *The Extraordinary Gift*. In the book, they've collected powerful stories about educators that illustrate how much teachers give of themselves—and how much they impact the lives of others. The authors hope these stories will remind readers of transformative educators in their own lives—and inspire them to make sure all teachers feel seen, valued, and deeply appreciated.

"Teachers are the backbone of our society," says Studer. "They don't just shape academic outcomes; they develop the next generation of thinkers, workers, and citizens. They foster essential life skills like communication, empathy, problem solving, and resilience. And for many students—myself included—teachers play a pivotal role in helping them connect to a lifelong passion and purpose."

Ultimately, Pilcher and Studer aim to start a "Love Our Teachers" movement. They want to engage people with the question, What can be done right now in the community to help teachers? and provide tangible actions anyone can do to make a difference.

First, it's important to understand the environment in which teachers are operating.

"Teachers today are navigating an increasingly difficult landscape," Pilcher explains. "Lingering effects of the pandemic mean that many students are still grappling with academic setbacks, shortened attention spans, and underdeveloped social skills, while others are not—creating wide disparities in the classroom."

At the same time, teachers are being asked to do more with fewer resources. They're facing larger class sizes, longer hours, and stagnant pay, all while vital support services are being cut.

"Many people respect individual educators, but public pressure, unrealistic expectations, and blame for issues beyond teachers' control have added to a growing sense of burnout and contributed to a worsening teacher shortage," Studer notes.

So, what can community members do to "love our teachers"?

"It's easy to look at the big picture and think that our actions are barely a drop in the bucket, and that we can't make a real difference," says Pilcher. "But nothing could be further from the truth. Look local. Start with one school, one grade, or one teacher. Seemingly small actions can have a multiplier effect."

To join the "Love Our Teachers" movement, Pilcher and Studer's suggestions include:

Make a mindset shift: See every child as "my" child. Good teachers already operate this way—that's why they make such a lasting impact on their students. What if everyone adopted the same mindset? What if, instead of viewing education as "someone else's" responsibility, all community members became active participants who feel personally invested in every student's success? The power would be incredible—and everyone would begin to see their relationship with teachers in a different light.

"Every day, teachers go beyond the call of duty and make tremendous progress in helping students learn, grow, and feel cared for," says Studer. "But they can't single-handedly address all academic and non-academic challenges kids face. Whether you're a parent, grandparent, or community member, take responsibility where you can. When we adopt this mindset collectively, we create a culture where people look out for one another, where teachers feel supported, and where kids have the best odds of reaching their potential. Everyone benefits."

Write a thank-you letter. Nearly everyone has at least one memory of a teacher who made a powerful difference in their life. But often, saying "thank you" happens years or even decades later. The sooner one can reach out, the better.

"Writing a letter is a great way to describe exactly how a teacher impacted your life—teachers keep, reread, and cherish these notes," says Pilcher. "The stories in *The Extraordinary Gift* end

with a thank-you letter to each teacher. Please use them as examples!"

She shares a few tips:

- Don't wait. Appreciation fills teachers' cups like nothing else. It reconnects them to their purpose and rekindles their passion. When appreciation is delayed (or when teachers don't receive it at all), they can feel invisible or undervalued.
- Consider recounting a specific memory. Explain what the teacher did and how it made an impact.
- Include detail. The most important thing is to say, "Thank you for making a difference."

Share stories of teacher impact. While saying "thank you" directly to teachers themselves is important, don't stop there. Share positive stories about teachers at work, with other parents, or on social media, for example. These stories have a ripple effect, because in highlighting the personal impact teachers have made inspires others to remember and appreciate educators who have been just as meaningful to them.

"Whether it's an academic breakthrough, a creative classroom project, or the way a teacher helped your child feel seen and supported, positive stories remind people that educators' work matters," says Studer. "Stories go a long way toward making sure communities don't take teachers for granted."

Be vocal and consistent. Teachers need to know the community has their back. Speak up when someone voices unfair criticism—whether it's at a dinner table, in a Facebook comment thread, or at a school board meeting. Counter incorrect assumptions with kindness but clarity.

"It also makes a big difference when people physically show up for teachers by attending school board meetings or PTO gatherings," says Pilcher. "Ask questions. Advocate for policies that uplift teachers and ensure they have the tools they need to do their jobs well."

Ask a teacher, "What action would help most right now?" Sometimes well-meaning gestures miss the mark—not because people don't care, but because they assume rather than ask. When teachers lead the conversation about their needs, it shows them genuine respect—and ensures that the given support makes the biggest impact.

"Instead of guessing what teachers need, take the time to ask directly," urges Studer. "Their answers might surprise you. It could be something big, like advocating for classroom resources, or something small, like cutting out flashcards or helping organize supplies. Sometimes, they may just need a listening ear or a word of encouragement on a tough day."

Teachers, make it easy for community members to help. If parents or other community members reach out and ask what they can do to help, be prepared with a list. Have options for people who want to donate money or resources, for those who can volunteer their time, for those whose assistance is available on a regular basis, and for those who would like to help in

the near future. It's good practice to proactively keep this kind of communication in front of parents by regularly saying, "If anyone is able to help, here's what our class needs now. Here's what's coming up." This allows people to plan ahead and dip in as they are able.

"I understand why sometimes teachers are tempted to say, 'I don't need anything,' when people ask how they can help," says Pilcher. "At one point or another, most teachers have experienced rejection or disappointment when they reached out to the community for support. Understand that sometimes people simply can't help—they may not have the resources, the right perspective, or enough bandwidth. Their reluctance to step up is probably not about you or a commentary on your teaching, so try not to take it personally."

Offer to support a local school. When people want to help but don't have a connection with an individual teacher, they can call a school and ask what gaps they may be able to fill. For instance, "Would it be helpful to have someone read with students once a week?" Or, "Do you need anyone to work lunch?" (Many teachers eat while they're supervising their students—they don't get a true break.) Another way to help is fulfilling a school's Amazon wish list.

"Whether it's tutoring students, helping in the library, offering career-day talks, or working with your employer to donate merchandise to a PTO fundraiser, everyone can do something to enrich a school's offerings and ease the burden on staff," says Studer.

"In today's educational environment, there are many challenges, but there are also plenty of opportunities," Studer concludes. "Those opportunities manifest in how we engage our teachers. If we want great teachers to stay in the profession—and inspire the next generation—we have to support them with more than words."

"The 'Love Our Teachers' movement has the power to do just that," adds Pilcher. "By encouraging a shared sense of responsibility, we can lift teachers up, lighten their loads, develop our kids, and strengthen ties across the community. It's a win-win-win for everyone."

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About the Authors:

Janet K. Pilcher, PhD

Janet is a coauthor of *The Extraordinary Gift: Our Teachers*. She is founder and president of Studer Education, and has an extensive background advising educational institutions on strategic planning, leadership development, employee engagement, and operational improvement. Janet and her team work with education leaders to elevate their organizations into places where people have purpose, do worthwhile work, and make a difference.

Janet spent nearly 20 years at the University of West Florida (UWF) as a professor, associate dean, and dean of the College of Education and Professional Studies. While at UWF, Janet cocreated TeacherReady, an online teacher certification program that prepares second-career teachers worldwide. She also started an education entrepreneurial center focused on developing

assessment and feedback strategies to improve systems and classrooms.

Janet is the author of several books, book chapters, and research articles. Her most recent book, *Hardwiring Excellence in Education*, has touched the hands of over 10,000 educators to date. She is also the host of the podcast *Accelerate Your Performance*.

Quint Studer

Quint is a coauthor of *The Extraordinary Gift: Our Teachers*. He is a lifelong student of leadership and a best-selling author. He has authored 16 books, presented his work at healthcare and professional conferences throughout the world, and is a renowned speaker.

Quint started his professional life as a special education teacher before transitioning to healthcare. He has served in executive positions including the president of Baptist Hospital in Pensacola, Florida. From there, he founded Studer Group, a high-performing leadership coaching organization, which he led to be a recipient of the Malcolm Baldrige Award in 2010. Working with Dr. Janet Pilcher, he provided the groundwork to begin Studer Education to transfer the best practices in healthcare leadership to education leadership.

In his most recent venture, Quint founded Healthcare Plus Solutions Group® (HPSG) with a mission of having a positive impact on those who receive care and those who provide care. He also started a nonprofit organization, the Studer Community Institute. A key initiative of the institute, the Building Brains Program, is designed to give every child the opportunity to be the best they can be and move the needle on kindergarten readiness.

About the Book:

The Extraordinary Gift: Our Teachers (Studer Education, 2025, ISBN: 978-1-7371170-2-5, \$19.95) is available at Amazon and studereducation.com/books/.

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