

*“The Lord bless you and keep you: The Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you: the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.”*

**Numbers 6:24-26**

I’ve been driving our son to school for fourteen years. During that time, I’ve observed crossing guards and other walkers with great admiration.

The same gray-haired guard always waved to our six-year-old son, making a flying butterfly symbol for him every morning. One day we were lucky enough to see him at our local grocery store to thank him.

Later in upper elementary and middle school, “Officer John” was our sentry. He favored firm, elaborate hand signals and loud voice commands to his whistle, but he’d always say hello to our dog, Lily.

Now that our son is in high school, I’m savoring each moment of my final year of driving him to school. I sip my coffee and soak in the sights of the young families on our route as he sleeps. I notice his strong hands.

Youngsters barely bigger than their backpacks walk several blocks to the adjacent elementary school. Two yellow-vested grandmothers step bravely into the crosswalk, stopping traffic with nothing more than white-gloved hands and whistles. I watch the tenderness of a young father as he takes his twins’ hands, looks both ways, and guides them gently off the curb.

The light changes, and we move forward with the rest of traffic. I glance in my rearview mirror in time to wave hello to the kindly man with the white sweatband and the leggy black Lab I’ve watched grow from a puppy. The crossing guard in front of school is in a good mood and gives me a slight nod. Our son climbs out of the passenger seat, and I say the words I imagine every other parent is saying to their child at that very same moment, “I love you, I’m proud of you, and I’m praying for you.”

*Lord, teach us to raise our hands to others in friendship, extending a greeting as we recognize how our lives are all inherently entwined. Show us there truly are no strangers. Remind us that in love, we are one. Amen.*

**Robin Bradley Hansel**

