

Stephie Vaughan  
Truck Driver Appreciation Essay Contest

I think the bottom line of what makes someone a hero is how far they are willing to go to help others. A true hero thinks more about the needs of others than of themselves. They are caring, persevering, and genuinely selfless. Some people think that a person has to have special powers in order to be a hero, but that isn't true. If someone is able to fight for change for the benefit of others, even if it's only in small ways, then they don't need super-strength or the ability to fly. Superhuman powers don't exist, but that doesn't mean that heroes can't be found in this world.

My father is a truck driver, and I think he personifies what it means to be a hero. He has been a truck driver for 24 years as of this August, and has always continued to strive to do the best he possibly can in his work as well as at home. In addition to his full-time job driving, my dad also comes home to work on our farm every day. He does his utmost to make sure that all of our animals are well cared for, and that they have the best living environment possible. We don't have the manpower or advanced machinery that a lot of big farms have, so my dad really has to work hard in everything he does -- especially when some things need to be done by hand. I really admire how my dad is able to work so hard every day and still do all of it with a smile.

Something else that I really respect about my dad is his desire to help others. Whenever a neighbor's animals get loose from their fences, he is the first person to rush to help. There have also been numerous times I can remember throughout my childhood when my dad would stop to assist complete strangers, which had no personal benefit to him whatsoever. I specifically remember one time when we were driving home, we stumbled across a huge truck that was transporting thousands of crushed aluminum cans. The back of the truck had somehow come open, and all of the cans had fallen out across the road. My dad could have just kept driving because he had to get home to feed the animals, but instead he stopped and offered to help pick up all the cans. He spent his own valuable time helping a complete stranger even when he had no obligation to, and this wasn't the first or last time that he had done something similar. Whenever he sees a car pulled over to the side of the road, he makes sure to ask if they need help. Another time, he even comforted an old woman who had just gotten into an accident until help arrived. No matter who needs help, no matter the circumstance, my dad is always willing to give it.

I have always had a very close relationship with my dad. When I was younger, he used to take my brother and I to a park after school every day and make up stories for us. At home, my dad and I would swing on our swingset for hours at night and count the stars. On our way to school we would always pass by a church, and he would always remind me to pray for my family to have a safe day, and to pray for anyone who needed help. He would always sing songs from his childhood and tell stories about how he always wanted to be a farmer, and how much he loved animals.

My dad has had numerous trucks over the years for his job, but I have had memories I will never forget in all of them. We have to drive over a half an hour to get to where we go to school, so my whole family spends a lot of time driving even though only my dad is a truck driver. The first truck I ever remember going to school in had a door that would no longer open because I had accidentally opened it into the wind. Even though we all had to crawl in through one side to get into the truck, my dad never complained or blamed me for it. He would always make jokes and get us special treats to have on the way home. I think the little things like that really made me love my dad. I can really only remember good times from my childhood.

Even now, my dad is still a hero to me. I'm going to be a senior in high school this coming year, and after that I'll have to head on to college. But I know that my dad is going to support me no matter what I decide to do with my future. I hope to someday become a person like him, someone that doesn't bat an eye about helping a stranger and always works hard. A hero doesn't have to have superpowers, but they do have to have a super heart. I think my dad is one of the people that truly has one.