

“How can we love our country and not love our countrymen, and loving them, reach out a hand when they fall, heal them when they are sick, and provide opportunities to make them self-sufficient” (Reagan). Contention thrives in America today with COVID-19, the vaccine, and masks. We live in a time of division and struggle. Many people who claim to defend our country from prejudice and injustice are the cause of hate and division, like the protesters who stormed the Capital on January 6, 2021 (BBC). These people claim to love America but their actions did not show a love for the people in it. America is a nation made for and of the people. We cannot love our country without loving its people. And amidst this war of words and tumult of opinions, true patriots understand what it means to love America. It takes compassion, understanding, and a genuine desire to help and serve our fellow countrymen. These values are found on the battlefield like in the book *Saving Dr. Warren... “A True Patriot”* by Jeffrey McKenna, in our community, and in our own homes. These people in these places exemplify the meaning of true patriotism today.

On far away battlefields, many patriots fight for our rights and freedom, giving so much for America and its people. My great grandfather, Ralph Brand, served on shore at Pearl Harbor when it was attacked. He was off duty when the bombing started, but immediately went into action helping his fellow sailors on shore wherever he was needed. He and countless others risked or laid down their own lives for our nation, while serving their fellow countrymen. An excellent example of patriotism abroad is Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who chose to stay in his nation with his fellow countrymen in a time of great conflict instead of accepting asylum from the United States. He remarked, "The fight is here; I need ammunition, not a ride"

(Braithwaite). By fighting alongside his people, he shows his unwavering love for his countrymen. And finally, leading up to the Revolutionary War, Dr. Joseph Warren stated, “I’m not afraid to die for this cause for which we labor. And if the worst were to occur, the Lord has said, ‘Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends’” (McKenna 153). Dr. Warren shows us what it means to devote our lives to our country. The veterans of our day, the Ukrainian President, and Dr. Warren, each dedicated their lives to serve their country and defend their friends and family. They showed that it takes unwavering love for your country and countrymen to be a true patriot.

Other patriots are found in our own community. Owners of small businesses or pioneering entrepreneurs exercise the right to create and employ. Our friend, Meg, owns a small business selling eggs. She is a single mother, who has the right to support her family through her own business. Patriots like these exercise their right to own a business, which promotes our everyday freedoms. This allows our community to be sustainable and work together to better local government.

Within our community we also find kind neighbors and loving friends. During the pandemic an elderly couple, whose family lived far away, became very lonely. Many friends and church members took time to visit, care for, and help this couple. These patriots support what this country stands for and do not hesitate to help the people in it. They show compassion and understand that helping others builds a better community, which ultimately affects our country. These people are a shining example of what it means to be a true patriot. They are the everyday heroes of our nation. They receive no glory and don't seek it. “Their patriotism is quiet but deep.

Their values sustain our national life” (Reagan). They are the patriots of this country.

Lastly, patriots are found within our home and family. My parents show patriotism by teaching me good values, while showing me the importance of my rights and freedom. Setting examples of working hard, they show compassion and serve those around them. My mother is constantly visiting those in need and helping others. My father supports our family and uses his free time to serve others even when he could be doing other things. They showed me that it takes hard work, compassion, and service to be a true patriot.

“Those who say we live in a time where there are no heroes just don't know where to look” (Reagan). Values of patriotism are everywhere. Essential to the survival of this nation, patriots are found on the battlefield, in our community, and in our own homes. Genuinely loving our country and countrymen and having a desire to serve them is what it takes to become a true patriot and what helps heal division and contention. These heroes are the patriots of our day. These people show us what it means to be a true patriot. And if we follow their example we can become true patriots and help heal our divided country.

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