

long, harsh winter season, Maine's heating oil providers not only sell a product, they serve as barrier between Mainers and the biting cold.

Relationships and care are at the heart of the Hometown Energy service structure, where, in true neighborly spirit, it is more crucial to ensure that customers are taken care of than to adhere to a stringent payment plan. Hometown Energy will often waive service fees and structure payments to give as much leeway as possible during the coldest months when resources are at a premium and ability to pay the high costs of energy may be scarce. It is this devotion to a customer-first philosophy that embodies the entrepreneurial spirit of Maine small businesses. The flexibility and understanding exhibited by Hometown Energy has proven vital to many in these difficult economic times.

Hometown Energy's efforts to assist Mainers was given national attention this year when they were featured by the New York Times article "In Fuel Oil Country, Cold That Cuts To The Heart," which detailed the difficulties of home heating during the trying northern winters. Since the article ran, donations have been pouring in to Hometown Energy to assist in covering the costs of heating oil. More than \$250,000 in donations have been sent by contributors from around the world. The kindhearted response and outreach has been so great that Hometown Energy has developed a Web site specifically dedicated to receiving these contributions.

For his immeasurable compassion and commitment to serving the people of his community, Mr. Libby has been recently recognized by Dixfield's Board of Selectmen as Dixfield's Distinguished Citizen for 2012. There can be no doubt that this honor is well-deserved by Mr. Libby, who has generously given his time, energy, and very self. Through his efforts, he has profoundly touched the lives of so many in his community.

Congratulations to Ike Libby on being named Dixfield's Distinguished Citizen for 2012. Mr. Libby and everyone at Hometown Energy's kindness and selfless dedication to assisting the most vulnerable truly warms my heart. I extend my most sincere gratitude for their steadfast service and offer them my best wishes for continued success.●

TRIBUTE TO KEN DUNLAP

● Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, today I wish to remember a man who had significant impact on the lives of hundreds, maybe thousands of Kansans.

Kansans very rarely live idle lives. We are an active hard-working State, always in motion, quick to rise to a challenge. The bigger the obstacle, the faster a Kansan will be there to remove it. Our Founders seemed to know that would be the case when they chose for our State motto, "ad astra ad aspera"—"to the stars through difficul-

ties." Kenneth Orville Dunlap, who grew up and lived in and around Wichita, KS, lived up to the motto.

A little less than 40 years ago, this Nation made a commitment to disabled children—or "differently able" as Ken liked to say—that we were going to provide them the best possible education in the least restrictive environment. Some people saw that commitment as an obstacle. Ken saw that commitment as an opportunity to help people live fuller lives.

Ken had been a teacher and coach in Kansas public schools for a couple of years when he decided to fully commit himself to special education. In the early 1970s, Ken established Wichita Public Schools' first Adaptive Physical Education curriculum at Levy Special Education Center. He went on to teach special education for 18 years at Wichita East High School, where he developed the first community-based instruction program, assisting special students with job readiness and placement.

Some folks might have looked at those accomplishments and called themselves a success. Ken, however, wasn't done yet. He went on to serve as a special education coordinator for the Wichita School District for 5 years and as principal of three special education programs at Starkey, Ketch, and Heartspring.

Still not finished, in 1996, Ken established one of the most innovative special education programs in the country—the Chisholm Life Skills Center. Ken had a vision for a school that would serve the community of Wichita, and at the same time teach its students the skills they would need to live independently. Chisholm students care for the yards of area seniors on their way to full-time paid jobs with landscaping companies. Students cook in the school cafeteria on their way to a career in food service. The school itself contracts with local businesses like Cessna/Textron Aviation, Intrust Bank and the United Way and students go on to work at several of those businesses. Chisholm is more than just a school; it is a bridge for "differently able" kids from education to the workforce and community. The staff, faculty and parents still strive for every student at Chisholm to be fully equipped with the skills needed upon graduation to live the most independent life possible in the local community.

In 1999, a Kansas storm put a different obstacle in Ken's way, when a deadly tornado ripped the roof off of Chisholm. Again, Ken saw the opportunity, transitioning from his role as educator and administrator to foreman. While most educators were enjoying their summer vacation, Ken was overseeing the cleanup and rebuilding of the school. He rallied the whole community. Teachers, parents and alumni all pitched in, clearing debris, cleaning and rebuilding Chisholm. The school today stands as a testament to Ken's leadership and the whole community's persistence.

And, just as Ken's commitment to his school didn't end with the school year, his commitment to special education didn't end in the schoolyard. Ken and his wife Jan devoted countless hours to volunteering with the Special Olympics. They took students on annual camping trips and chaperoned the Chisholm Prom each year. They went to students' weddings and attended their funerals. Even after he retired from his 37 years in public education, Ken continued to serve on the Sedgwick County Physical & Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board.

For the last year, Ken has battled lung cancer and on Saturday, surrounded by his family, he took his last breath. This remarkable man's life was celebrated and remembered this week by family, friends, colleagues and former students. During the visitation on Tuesday at the funeral home, one of the last people to pay their respects to Ken was a former student. This young man shared with Ken's family that he had caused a lot of trouble to Ken when he was a student. Before he left, he walked over to the casket and put his hand on Ken's shoulder. He said simply, "Thank you for everything, Mr. Dunlap," and turned to leave. Then he stopped. He asked Jan if he could leave something behind. Pulling a Special Olympics Medal from his pocket, he laid it on Ken's chest, thanked him again and left.

We will never know how many lives Ken touched nor the full impact he made—but he leaves behind a great legacy and his life stands as an example to us all. His dedication to others is a powerful reminder of what is most important in life—the people around us. May we learn from Ken's example and make a lasting difference in the lives of others.●

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF REPTILE GARDENS

● Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize a very important South Dakota business and visitor attraction that is observing its 75th anniversary this year. Reptile Gardens has been a main focal point for Black Hills area residents and the touring general public since 1937.

It all began in 1935 when 19-year-old Earl Brockelsby discovered people's interest in snakes. As a young tour guide at a local Rapid City attraction, this fearless snake enthusiast would often end his tours by removing his hat and revealing a live rattlesnake coiled on top of his head.

With the help of some friends, Earl built an 18-by-24-foot building at the top of a long hill outside of Rapid City and put a handful of specimens on display. Even then, the young entrepreneur knew the vital importance of location, location, location, as back in the 1930s cars would often overheat as they reached the top of a long hill. Earl's idea was to have the cars stop in Reptile Gardens' parking lot to cool