

Seven Letters

Oak Street
HOTEL

Denise McCravey

WELCOME. *Seven letters when arranged correctly spell a word that as it rolls out your mouth ends in a smile.*

Welcome is a word not often used as a verbal greeting. Yet welcome can be conveyed with the slightest look, a warm smile, an extended hand and even a plate of cookies. The atmosphere in the midst of good friends and family may never be expressed in the word welcome yet there is a sense of deep belonging that underlines the word and sometimes makes it glow.

Over the years several welcomes have changed my world. On the first day of high school Spanish class the teacher asked us to turn to the people near us and to greet them in Spanish.

I spoke hesitantly to the student to my left. "Hello. Welcome. My name is _____." For me it translated to "Hola. Bienvenido. Me llamo Louisa." My name became Louisa when they found Denise didn't translate well.

Then I turned to greet the student to my left. When our eyes connected he blushed deep red, a red that contrasted sharply against his white turtleneck shirt. My first words in shy Spanish to Miguel (Mike) combined with his blush began a new language for the two of us. Miguel became my best friend and husband of 36 years.

Welcome. Once when greeting people at a church in Texas, a tall slim woman turned and grasped my hands, her smile friendly and open. When she told me her name was Becky I saw eyes full of laughter. I knew the two of us would have fun together. Although we see each other rarely she is still a dear friend even after thirty years. It may be five years between our visits, yet after the first welcome greeting, we share like we live next door.

When Mike and I first moved to Hood River we lived in a small rental house in Oak Grove. A day or so after arriving, we realized we had moved far away from friends and family for adventure in the Pacific Northwest. Loneliness settled over our shoulders as spring rain fell. One day we looked out the window and saw a female golden retriever and her puppy trot up the driveway like a welcoming committee.

The two dark-golden dogs came right up on the porch and looked at the door. We opened it to see if a human had also come to welcome us but saw there was no two-legged greeter. Some of our loneliness lifted as we played with the dogs. After a while the mother dog sniffed the puppy, seemed to communicate a message, and she trotted off alone. It was as if they agreed we were fine folks and

Willkommen

KALOS ORISATE

Bienvenue

इतिथि
तमत्तदेः

Добро
позхаловат

Merhaba

Oideyasu

Welcome

in Seven Languages

needed the puppy more than anything in the world.

We sought the dog's owner and returned the puppy, but the little pup followed us home. We returned her again, but found her once again on our doorstep. After several more times, the owner asked us to keep her. The dog had adopted us. Molly became a cherished member of the family. Her enthusiastic welcome greetings made our adjustment to our new Hood River home much easier.

Welcome can mean acceptance, friendship, and willingness to acknowledge another's talent or wisdom or advice. Offering a welcome greeting can open another's eyes to cultural, racial, political and religious thoughts that would have never been expressed without a warm greeting.

We see this happen everyday at the Oak Street Hotel in welcoming our guests. Everyone responds to a warm

welcome—couples traveling from all over the world, families gathering for a wedding, business people away from loved ones. Some stay at the hotel and share their lives with us while eating breakfast in the lobby or when sitting by the fire with hot tea and cookies in the evening or relaxing on the front porch. Even those we see briefly as they come to check into a vacation rental for a few days we extend that same welcome.

For those who visit often we know who likes warm blueberry muffins and who likes vanilla yogurt with granola for breakfast, who likes soy milk instead of cream in their coffee. In the evening some of our guest enjoy warm cookies while others would prefer hot cocoa. Food is a wonderful way to say welcome. Remembering how someone likes their food or drink makes them feel even better.

A sincere "Welcome" in any language opens wide the doors of life.

Denise McCravey, owner of the Oak Street Hotel with her husband Mike, welcomes Pilar Bello as she has many others from around the world ▼



"Linen Service, Please"

Fresh soft white towels, clean linens on a newly made bed and a clean house make most people take a deep breath and relax. Especially, when others do all the work.

Guests at furnished vacation homes provided by Gorge Rentals and the Oak Street Hotel know they can call and schedule linen and cleaning service from daily to weekly.

It's as simple as saying, "Linen service, please."

