

A Blessed Thanksgiving

Back in 1996 I was a single mom of 3 small children 8, 3 & 1 - I had moved to Cincinnati, Ohio for a job with the Hamilton County Juvenile Court, great job, great pay. However, as a single mom you never seem to have enough. Well, I had worked there for several months and was really struggling, I really didn't have any support system and my only friends were my co-workers.

Around the end of October 1996 it was payday and my co-workers and I walked to the Star Bank (they're all over down there) in downtown Cincinnati to cash our checks and go to lunch. I made my transaction and hurried off with the girls. Later that day, after I left work, picked my kids up from day care I stopped to get gas right near my apartment. After my bills I barely had enough to buy groceries and diapers. I went to pay for my gas and looked in my wallet and there was way too much money - at first I thought, oh no she gave me what I wanted in my checking and put in my checking the small amount of cash I wanted in my wallet. I checked my slip and realized that the amount I wanted in my checking was in there and realized the teller had accidentally given me \$100 too much. Well, conveniently right next to the gas station was another Star Bank and it was almost 5:00 - I thought oh I've got to get this back to them right now. So I hurried over and walked in and handed the \$100 to the teller and told her, this isn't mine. She just stared at me in disbelief. She got the Manager and I explained the whole story, she just stared at me. I said, believe me I really, really, need this \$100 right now, but it's not mine. They took it and thanked me and that was that.

The next day I received a call from the teller from the downtown branch. She called to tell me it was her first week and she had almost lost her job because of the missing \$100. She thanked me for my honesty. I said to her "No problem, it wasn't mine."

At the courthouse where I worked there were 6 Magistrates. My coworkers and I were each assigned to one Magistrate. On occasion, as the need arose, we would fill in for one another in a different Magistrates court.

A couple weeks after I returned the \$100 to the bank my finances were worse than ever. It was getting close to Thanksgiving and I was very, very hard up. I wasn't even planning on making the trip home to see my family because I just couldn't afford it and I was very depressed.

About that time I got a call from one of the Magistrates that one of my coworker worked for. I had filled in for her court a few times, but I really didn't know her. The Magistrate called my desk and asked me to come to her office.

When I got to her office, I sat down and she started telling me her story of how her Dad was a judge and left her mom when she was young. She told me how she had 5 brothers and sisters and how badly her mother struggled but that she had never forgotten how people had always helped her mom out during those years.

She then told me that she didn't want to offend me, but that she had noticed that I was struggling. She said that at first she had called me and asked me to come to her office so that she could invite me and my children to her house for Thanksgiving with her family but then she went on to say that perhaps what I really needed, and probably should do, was to go home and be with my own family. The choice was mine to make and she handed me a check for \$300!!!!

I started to cry, I couldn't believe it! She just hugged me and said, "All I ask is that when you're in the position to help someone, do it." Not long after that day, I ended up leaving that job due to the stress of being away from my family but I never forgot what she did for me.

Fast forward to 1998 - I was working here in Midland and was talking with one of my co-workers one day. She too was a single mom. She was having all kinds of struggles; car trouble, sick baby, etc... I had just made a big commission and I didn't think twice. I told my coworker the whole story about how I had been helped a few years back and then I handed her \$200 cash. She cried and hugged me and I told her the same thing that I had been told years ago, "Just make sure you help someone else when you can."