

MAKING LEMONADE OUT OF LEMONS

By Janet Haley
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What do you do when you feel you have nowhere else to turn? This is where a young mother found herself after her husband had left her five months earlier. He had taken much of the family's personal belongings and put them in a storage unit: then did not pay the rental fees.

The young mother contacted the storage company, but they wouldn't talk to her since her name wasn't on the rental form. She begged and pleaded with them while all the mementos and clothing of her four girls (ages 6, 11, 13, 15) sat out of reach in storage. The storage unit company would not work with her.

In a predicament that she never thought she would find herself, this previous stay-at-home mom began a warehouse job wrapping gifts during the holiday season. Despite the lack of heat in the warehouse and her own lack of warm clothing, this mother had a good work ethic and the determination to provide for her girls. The oldest girl began to babysit to help with expenses. They hoped their mother's seasonal job would become a full-time position, and they would be able to get back on track.

She finally reached the point where she could no longer allow her pride to keep her from asking for help. Working with the school counselor, she was introduced to the Habit of the Heart Fund which helps Hendricks County women and children in emergency need. Her story touched the hearts of the members of the grant committee, and within **one week of the application** they approved a gift to provide warm clothing for the family.

The mother and two of the girls were met at the local Kohl's store by a Habit of the Heart member. At the store they selected warm clothing for all four girls and the mother: outfitting them with coats, boots, mittens, hats, socks, sweatshirts, pants, and more. The youngest daughter also received a dress to wear in her school Christmas program; she was thrilled. You could tell by the look in the mother's eyes that she was thankful her daughter could participate in the program with the other students. The mother's hope is that once she is on her feet, she will be able to give back to others in need.

This is a story of a family right here in Hendricks County. In our community, unemployment hovers around eight percent, and in 2009 there were nearly 5,000 students receiving free and reduced lunches in our schools. These are our neighbors and our friends, and the struggles in our county continue to grow. What I find encouraging is the generosity within our residents and how many have demonstrated their support. The Habit of the Heart Fund was created by a group of women who saw the needs of our students and wanted to make a difference. This fund has granted over \$75,000 to Hendricks County women and children in emergency need. Your donation could help provide clothing, medicine or dental work to our county's less fortunate. Donate online at www.hendrickscountycf.org or to learn more about how your donation can be used to help others in Hendricks County, please contact me at 317.718.1200 or janet@hendrickscountycf.org.