



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 21, 2020

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The Goodness of America

Canceled Plans Lead to Good Deed

When an Illinois couple canceled their wedding plans, they decided to use the money that was supposed to pay for catering their wedding to feed the less fortunate at Thanksgiving.

Planning a wedding during a pandemic is hard, particularly when Americans have found themselves at the mercy of overreaching state and local governments. Emily Bugg and Bill Lewis had originally planned to marry at a hip warehouse in the West Town neighborhood, the *Chicago Sun-Times* reported, with 150 guests from all over the country. But with ongoing COVID restrictions, seemingly without an end in sight, the couple did not want to continue to delay their nuptials. Instead, they got married at City Hall in Chicago on October 1.

The couple then teamed up with their caterer, Big Delicious Planet, to take their catering deposit and use it to prepare 200 Thanksgiving dinners for Thresholds, an organization for which Emily works that supports individuals with mental illness and substance-abuse issues. Because of the pandemic, Thresholds was unable to host its usual Thanksgiving celebration for its clients, so the donation was enormous.

"In the grand scheme of things, canceling a big wedding isn't the worst thing that could happen," Bugg told *Good Morning America*. "We're happy to be married, and we're so happy that we could help Thresholds' clients feel the connection of a Thanksgiving meal as a result of the wedding cancellation."

Meals consisted of turkey, mashed potatoes, and vegetables. The staff at Thresholds helped the caterers box the meals and then delivered them to the clients' homes before the holiday.

The couple also worked with their wedding venue, Salvage One, to put their deposit toward a future event for the Epilepsy Foundation, *Good Morning America* reported. According to the *Washington Post*, epilepsy is a "cause Bugg has a connection to."

And Emily told the *Post*, "So many people have told me this was a beautiful way to start our married life together."

Aubrey

A kind gesture by a FedEx driver in Ohio brought tears of joy to an unsuspecting child and his family, Fox 5 New York reported.

When a FedEx driver, known only as Aubrey, noticed on her route a young boy named Elijah Wheeler playing basketball with a rusty hoop, she decided to bless him with a brand new hoop and basketball.

On November 8, Aubrey left the items on the Wheelers' porch along with a note on the instruction manual that read, "Wasn't sure if you wanted sand, or water, in the base, so you'll need a good amount of weight to keep it from falling over. Take care!"

She signed it "Aubrey, just one of the FedEx drivers for the area."

Aubrey also left a second note on a FedEx "missed delivery" slip that she taped to the basketball packaging. "I just wanted you and your son to have the best hoop that'll grow with him and all his friends! It's wonderful that you guys shoot hoops with him," the note read.



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Stunned by Aubrey's generosity, Elijah's mother, Coledo, posted photos of the surprise on Facebook on November 9. "I instantly started crying. Come to find out a random act of kindness had happened in our home," Wheeler wrote.

Wheeler noted that the hoop Elijah had been playing with before the surprise was in rough shape, and recalled seeing Aubrey in the area one of the many times Elijah was shooting baskets with his parents, brother, and friends.

"What an awesome amazing thing that she did for him out of pure kindness. There are very much still good people in the world," Wheeler continued in her post.

When Elijah discovered the surprise, he immediately cried, his mother said. It wasn't long before he was ready to play basketball, Wheeler added.

And as if Aubrey didn't already do enough, she returned the next day to drop off sandbags to fill the hoop, Wheeler's Facebook post noted.

Wheeler later told *Good Morning America* the gesture was like an early Christmas present, particularly since her boys love to play basketball. She said Elijah plays with the new hoop every morning before school.

"The Great Derecho"

In the aftermath of a devastating and destructive derecho — a group of intense and widespread windstorms and thunderstorms — that tore that through eastern Iowa on August 10, 12-year-old Tommy Rhomberg found a unique way to help raise money for the victims.

Rhomberg turned fallen branches from trees into baseball bats for sale and used the money he raised to help the storm victims rebuild. He named the handmade bat "The Great Derecho," a play on "The Great Bambino," and has since carved more than 100 bats and donated \$2,500 to the Community Foundation's Disaster Recovery Fund for victims of the storm.

"We didn't have, like, any damage [to our home]," Rhomberg told CBS News, "but just driving around town there were people with half their house destroyed, and I just wanted to raise money so we could help them."

It began as a simple gesture for a friend before morphing into something with a much greater impact, the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation explained on its website. Tommy's friend Walker was celebrating a birthday, and Tommy wanted to do something special for him since his birthday plans had been derailed by the storm. Tree branches littered the road following the storm, and inspired the builder in him to get creative. Tommy found a branch and began to whittle a bat for his baseball-loving friend, and painted "The Great Derecho" on the side before giving it to Walker as a birthday present. The bat took more than 10 hours to make by hand.

The bat was enormously popular, prompting requests for Tommy to make more. It was then that Tommy realized he could use the bats to raise money for recovery efforts.

With help from his dad, Tommy began whittling and staining more bats. Tommy presented a check for \$2,500 to the Community Foundation's Disaster Recovery Fund on November 2.

When Tommy's story was aired on CBS Evening News at the end of October, hundreds of new orders



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came flooding in. Customers are now on a wait list for bats.



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