



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 24, 2023

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The Goodness of America

Officers Save Suicidal Woman

La Porte, Indiana, police officers Ryan Helmecy and Taylor Atkinson were honored for saving the life of a suicidal woman who threatened to jump from the U.S. 35 overpass on August 28.

On that fateful day, the woman was at the top of a chain-link security fence along the edge of the overpass while a bystander pleaded with her not to jump. The woman had made her way down the other side of the fence by the time Helmecy arrived. He rushed over, jumped on top of the fence, and grabbed the hysterical woman by the arm. He held on to her until Officer Atkinson was able to climb to the other side of the fence and grab hold of the woman. He did not let her go until she was rescued via the bucket on a fire truck below the overpass.

Police Chief Paul Brettin said the officers refused to let the woman go, despite her pleas for them to do that.

“They completely put their well-being aside to go over that fence and hang on,” recalled Officer Adam Jaskowiak, who arrived on the scene in time to see it all unfold.

Homeless Man Comes to Girl’s Rescue

When a first-grade special-needs student at Lantrip Elementary School in the Houston Independent School District wandered a mile away from her school, a nearby homeless man came to her aid.

Serenity Polk somehow managed to get away from the school during dismissal on September 28. Her frightened mother, Mercedes, knew something was wrong after being given the runaround by school staff for more than an hour after dismissal.

“They were saying she might be at the playground. She might be in the bathroom, but it was over an hour,” Mercedes told Fox 26.

Serenity is deaf and visually impaired, so Mercedes was especially terrified at the notion of her being off school grounds on her own. Anxious thoughts pervaded her mind, she told the *Houston Chronicle*.

After an hour, Mercedes received a call from Houston police asking her to meet them at the local 7-Eleven, where her daughter had been located.

“[Serenity] was hysterically crying. Like, I really thought she was hurt,” Polk said. “It hurt me. I’m still shaken up by it, actually. It’s very terrifying.”

Serenity told her mother that she was looking for their home, which was 30 minutes away. She then pointed to a homeless man, who she said helped her.

“A homeless man that holds the sign right there on Cullen and I-45 found my daughter,” Mercedes said. “He contacted the school. The school went to get her. She wouldn’t get in the car with them. So the school contacted the police. She wouldn’t get in the car with the police and that’s when they called me.”

Mercedes explained that the man saw the name of the school on the child’s shirt and contacted the school.

With Serenity found, school officials were able to get to the bottom of what happened. The Houston



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Police Department told Mercedes that the substitute teacher covering Serenity's class placed Serenity in the wrong line.

Mercedes is hoping to locate the man who helped her daughter.

Four Years Old and Already Altruistic

Four-year-old Carter Dominguez opened his own lemonade stand in Tonawanda, New York, and decided to donate all of his earnings to "sick kids," WKBW reported.

On September 27, Dominguez raised \$262 after selling lemonade all day. He decided to give the money to the Variety Club, an organization that assists children with illnesses, disabilities, and other disadvantages by donating to several children's charities and hospitals.

First responders stopped by Carter's stand on September 27, and firefighters gave him a chance to use the fire hose.

Carter told WKBW that he wants to be both a firefighter and a police officer when he grows up.

Starbucks "Mom" Gets Surprise From Her "Kids"

A popular "motherly" Starbucks barista in Huntington, West Virginia, got the surprise of her life from store patrons and colleagues after her car was burglarized.

Karen Collinsworth has been a supervisor at the Starbucks on the Marshall University Campus for decades, and has created a feeling of family at the shop that many college students enjoy when they stop in for coffee.

"I love coming into work knowing that she's gonna be there. I talk to her about literally everything," Cassie Gray, a sophomore at Marshall who works at Starbucks, told *Today*. "She's like my mom when I'm away from home and can't talk to my mom."

When Collinsworth's car was burglarized and parts were stolen from the vehicle, Gray and her colleagues at the store decided they wanted to do something to help.

They created a GoFundMe fundraiser on August 26 in the hopes of helping pay to fix her car — which had always had mechanical problems — and replace the parts that were stolen. The fundraising page was shared on a variety of social-media outlets, and the results were astonishing. The \$10,000 goal was easily passed, with the page amassing a heaping \$40,000.

"I was taken aback when I found out. It was very overwhelming. I knew these kids loved me because I love them," Collinsworth said. "But for them to be 19-year-old college students.... They have so much going on in their life, but then to take care of their Starbucks mom, Karen. That's just how big their hearts are."

The largest donation was \$5,000, from Marshall University President Brad Smith.

"All the \$5 donations meant more to me than \$1,000 or \$3,000," Collinsworth says. "It was just precious coming from these college kids that can't afford a cup of coffee. Just goes to show you their kindness."



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