

Written by <u>Raven Clabough</u> on February 20, 2024 Published in the March 11, 2024 issue of <u>the New American</u> magazine. Vol. 40, No. 05

#### The Goodness of America

## Joy on Wheels

In Tucson, Arizona, Frank Powers has turned his lifelong passion for art and literature into The Comic Bookmobile, KGUN 9 reported. Since its inception in 2018, this charming initiative has seen Powers hitting the streets in his vintage 1969 Volkswagen Bus, spreading joy and creativity to children across the city. What started as a personal dream born from Powers' love for cartoons and stand-up comedy has blossomed into a full-fledged movement dedicated to empowering young minds.

Drawing from his own experiences and artistic journey, Powers sets up vibrant and interactive stations at schools and public events. From coloring sessions to drawing lessons and even puppet shows, every activity is designed not just for entertainment, but also to instill a sense of confidence and self-belief in the young participants.

For Powers, The Comic Bookmobile is more than just a mobile art studio — it's a platform for addressing important issues such as bullying and mental health. Through his engaging sessions, he encourages children to believe in themselves and their abilities, reminding them that they have the power to achieve their dreams with determination and perseverance.

Powers is aiming for bigger horizons. He's taken to YouTube to extend his reach, and hopes to one day pitch a television show that embodies the spirit of educational classics such as *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. His ultimate goal? To inspire and lift up children across the nation, spreading joy and self-confidence wherever his colorful bus travels.

Library events hold a special place in Powers' heart, and he finds them to be among the most rewarding experiences on his journey. Looking ahead, he's gearing up to attend prominent events such as the Tucson Festival of Books and the Wild Wild West Steampunk Convention at Casino Del Sol, eager to continue his mission of igniting creativity and positivity in young hearts everywhere. With each stop along his route, Powers brings smiles, laughter, and a whole lot of inspiration.

#### **Crocheted Connection**

Garden City, New York, natives Kelly and Jake Levine embarked on a nerve-wracking journey with their five-month-old daughter, Romey, as they prepared to fly to Mexico for a New Year's vacation. Like any new parents, they were anxious about how their little one would fare during the long flight. However, it was the return trip that unexpectedly turned into a heartwarming encounter, ABC 7 News reported.

During the flight home, Romey became entranced by a fellow passenger across the aisle who was skillfully crocheting. Mesmerized by the woman's hands moving rhythmically, Romey remained calm and captivated throughout the journey. The woman, 49-year-old Meegan Rubin of Pennsylvania, noticed the baby's interest, and realized that the yarn she was using matched Romey's outfit.

With an hour left on the flight, Rubin decided to channel her newfound hobby into a heartwarming gesture. She began crafting a beanie for Romey using the matching yarn, determined to surprise the family with her handmade gift upon landing.

The moment was captured by Romey's mom and shared on TikTok, quickly garnering viral attention and touching the hearts of millions worldwide.





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Rubin, who had taken up crocheting during the Covid pandemic, explained that she couldn't resist the opportunity to bring joy to the adorable baby. Crocheting had become a therapeutic escape for her during challenging times, offering a sense of peace and fulfillment in creating something beautiful out of a simple strand of yarn.

For Kelly, Jake, and Meegan, this encounter served as a reminder of the power of kindness and human connection, leaving a lasting impression of warmth and goodwill long after the flight had ended.

## Small Hands, Big Heart

Davenee Jaramillo, a compassionate second grader in the Levelland Independent School District, west of Lubbock, Texas, embarked on a mission to spread kindness to those experiencing homelessness in her community. Moved by empathy and a desire to make a difference, seven-year-old Davenee used her allowance and rallied community support to create goodie bags filled with essential items.

Driven by a genuine concern for others, Davenee felt compelled to act after witnessing homelessness firsthand. On January 4, with the support of her family, she set out to assemble 100 care packages, each containing vital supplies such as food, socks, toiletries, and more. Willing to put up \$20 from her own bank account, Davenee reached out for help through a heartfelt video plea.

Through the generosity of family, friends, and kind-hearted strangers, Davenee's fundraising efforts exceeded all expectations, raising between \$700 and \$800. Buoyed by this outpouring of support, Davenee and her family eagerly set to work, transforming their living room into a makeshift assembly line to pack the bags with care.

Their distribution efforts spanned multiple locations, including local police stations and a transitional homeless shelter called Grace Campus.

"We loaded her up in a trailer and we put the blankets in the bags," Davenee's mother, Debbie, told *USA Today*. "She just immediately was in her element, just handing out and talking to people. It was pretty nice to see."

But the act of kindness didn't end there. Serendipity intervened as the family stumbled upon St. Benedict's Chapel, which supports the homeless community. Recognizing an opportunity to extend their reach, they graciously donated their surplus bags, further illuminating the lives of those they encountered.

For Davenee, kindness knows no bounds. With plans to continue her philanthropic endeavors, she issues a heartfelt challenge to all: "Be kind to other people." In her youthful innocence and unwavering compassion, Davenee serves as a beacon of hope, reminding us all of the profound impact a single act of kindness can have on the world.



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