



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on November 23, 2015

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## **The Goodness of American**

### **\$35,000 Feast**

The Duane family of Sacramento, California, decided to turn bad news into something quite positive. They turned their daughter's cancelled wedding into an extravagant feast for the homeless.

Quinn Duane, the bride-to-be, called her parents days before the wedding to announce that she and her fiancé decided that they would not go through with it. Besides the obvious shock and sadness that the bride's parents felt at the news, they also knew that the planned wedding reception was a nonrefundable event. According to KCRA News, deposits had already been paid for the \$35,000 wedding, and invoices continued to roll in for the remaining costs.

And that's when they conceived of their great idea.

Fox News reported that the bride's mother, Kari Duane, decided against cancelling the reception, opting instead to invite Sacramento's homeless for "a once in a lifetime meal ... at the Citizen Hotel, one of the city's finest venues."

For Kari, the decision was virtually a no-brainer. "When I found out on Monday that the wedding would not be taking place, it just seemed like, of course, this would be something that we would do to give back," Kari Duane said.

The October 18 reception was prepared to host 120 wedding guests, but instead welcomed 90 homeless members of the community. They feasted on salmon, gnocchi, salad, and appetizers.

"Even though my husband and I were feeling very sad for our daughter, it was heartwarming to see so many people be there and enjoy a meal," Duane said.

Rashad Abdullah arrived at the venue with his wife and five children, KCRA reported. They were touched by the Duane family's charity. "When you're going through a hard time and a struggle for you to get out to do something different and with your family, it was really a blessing," Abdullah said.

For the disappointed bride-to-be, it was too painful to be present at the affair. She chose to stay home with friends.

And through the sadness, Kari was relieved that she could lift the spirits of those less fortunate: "I feel a lot of heartache and heartbreak for [Quinn], but I will take away something good from this, I will."

### **Support Coach Kennedy**

Assistant Coach Joe Kennedy of Bremerton, Washington, loves God and has a tradition of showing Him his appreciation through pregame and postgame prayers. And even as his seven-year tradition of public displays of prayer has suddenly landed him in hot water, Coach Kennedy has elected to fight for his First Amendment rights by maintaining his tradition. Fortunately, he has found significant support from people near and abroad.

Fox News reports that for years, Coach Kennedy conducted pregame prayers in the locker room and postgame prayers on the field every game. Many times, he prayed alone, but he was often joined by students and players, which has recently sparked controversy.

It is unclear what set off the chain of events, but Bremerton School District Superintendent



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Aaron Leavell sent a letter to Kennedy on September 17 in which he detailed district policy against public employees exhibiting religious behavior on the job. Leavell claimed that the district has “an obligation to protect the rights of all students and staff.”

The letter contends that though participation in prayers was voluntary, “both activities would very likely be found to violate the First Amendment’s Establishment Clause, exposing the district to significant risk of liability.”

The letter instructed Kennedy to cease all public prayer and all references to anything religious in the locker room. He was also forbidden from kneeling or bowing his head, Fox News writes.

After receiving the letter, Kennedy yielded to the district’s demands, in fear of losing his job. When the Texas-based Liberty Institute stepped in to take up his cause, however, he decided to fight the district.

In a letter sent by the Liberty Institute to the school district on October 14, the Liberty Institute informed the district that Kennedy will resume his constitutional practice of postgame prayer at the 50-yard line beginning on October 16. But just hours before the October 16 game, the district sent another letter stating that violations of their policy “cannot be tolerated.”

Nevertheless, following a tough homecoming game on October 16, Coach Kennedy made his way to the center of the field and knelt in prayer.

When he lifted his head, he was astonished by what he saw. He was completely surrounded by football players from the opposing team and a number of the team’s fans. “All of a sudden I feel all these bodies around me and I’m hoping they’re not kids,” Kennedy said in tears after the game.

Additionally, the *Seattle Times* reported that a number of people in attendance at that game were there simply to show their support for Coach Kennedy.

The *Times* wrote, “Andy Lancaster of Silverdale came to his first football game at Bremerton High on Friday to pray with Kennedy after the game.”

Lancaster’s reason? “I’m here because I can’t stand ACLU bullies.”

The show of support for Coach Kennedy has been amazing, and has expanded to far outside of the local community.

*War Room* film producers Alex and Stephen Kendrick created a video in support of Coach Kennedy, and NFL Coach Tony Dungy wrote on Twitter, “I appreciate Coach Kennedy staying true to his convictions.” There is also a Facebook page and petition to support Coach Kennedy.

And Coach Kennedy is going to need continued support, as the school district has placed him on administrative leave for violating the district’s directives. The Liberty Institute has initiated the process for a lawsuit against the district in response.

Kennedy is saddened that it has come to this. He noted, “I spent 20 years in the Marine Corps, and it’s been about protecting the freedom of other people. It’s about the freedom, and people can believe whatever they want. I’m just exercising my right.”



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