

Written by <u>Raven Clabough</u> on September 18, 2017 Published in the September 18, 2017 issue of <u>the New American</u> magazine. Vol. 33, No. 18



# **Goodness of America**

## Thousands of Rainbow Bridges

Thousands of strangers are going out of their way to make life just a little less sad for a nine-year-old boy who lost both of his parents within weeks of each other, ABC News reported.

Robbie's Ecuyer's mother, Shelley, who suffered from gastroparesis and cystic fibrosis, told him that if anything ever happened to her, she would be crossing a rainbow bridge to heaven. She passed away in May, leaving Robbie in the care of his father, who unfortunately overdosed just two weeks later and died.

On the same day that Robbie's father died, a family member who was picking Robbie up from school was shocked to see a double rainbow hanging over Robbie's school. She took a photo to show Robbie as evidence that his parents had crossed a rainbow bridge to heaven.

The photo had a profound impact on Robbie, who is autistic. Robbie's aunt, Crystal, who has taken custody of her nephew, saw how Robbie reacted to the photo and took to social media with a plea for others to share their own photos of rainbows for Robbie.

What happened next was not expected. Over 7,000 people sent photos of single and double rainbows from all over the United States and across the world. One little girl named Samantha Sparks, from Baltimore, Maryland, sent Robbie a picture that looks as though the rainbow is literally coming out of her hand.

According to Crystal, the rainbow pics have meant a lot to Robbie. "It's very comforting knowing that so many people have reached out to him with the simple request of a rainbow," she said.

# Cop by Day, Monster Hunter by Night

Sindey Fahrenbruch, four, was afraid that there could be monsters in her new house in Longmont, Colorado. So when she met Officer David Bonday at a community fundraiser in July, she asked him if he could help. Bonday responded to the little girl's request as if it was just another day on the job.

"She was worried that there may be some monsters in her new house," he said, adding that she and her mother, Megan, asked if he could drop by to "check the house before they moved in."

"It was probably one of the cutest things I've ever been involved with as a police officer," said Officer Bonday.

Fahrenbruch met the officer in front of her house on July 23, before entering to look for scary beasts. "She led me into the house and the monster hunting began," he explained.

Fahrenbruch escorted Bonday through the entire home in search of anything scary. Officer Bonday then continued his search outside, where he checked the bushes. He gave Fahrenbruch his flashlight so that she could help.

Deputy Chief of Police Services Jeff Satur told ABC News he's proud of the work Officer Bonday did that day. "We really work hard in our community to build relationships and him taking a few minutes out of his day helped ... improve the image that everybody has about police officers," he said..

Veterans-turned-bridge-builders

# **New American**

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Local veterans in Calloway County, Kentucky, did a beautiful thing for a veteran's widow named Belinda Hart.

Hart regularly takes her mother, who suffers from Alzheimer's disease and is wheelchair-bound, to doctor's appointments. Unfortunately, whenever she would take her mother out, she would have to make her way across a creek using two narrow sections of logs that were put in place after a bridge was swept away by recent flooding in the area.

When Sam Warner and Flenoy Barrow of the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization in Calloway County heard about the Harts' predicament, they took it upon themselves to build a new bridge for the family in July.

It cost \$734 to build the bridge, paid for out of the Poppy Fund from the VFW in Murray, Kentucky. It's a fund from donations the group uses to build ramps for veterans in the community.

### **Best Friend to the Rescue**

Paul Burnett of Poway, California, is a soon-to-be third-grader who did something wonderful for his best friend, Kamden Houshan, who is wheelchair-bound. Burnett noticed Houshan was struggling with the wheelchair due to its weight and bulk. He knew Houshan needed a lightweight wheelchair, but his insurance would not cover another one for a few years. So Burnett set up a GoFundMe page to raise money to buy his friend a wheelchair.

According to Today.com, Kamden was born with a tumor on his T2 and T3 vertebrae, large enough to engulf his spinal cord. He has had three surgeries, and has been rendered a parapalegic and relies on a wheelchair. Unfortunately, his insurance only pays for a wheelchair every five years, and the chair Kamden was using was not a good fit.

Paul had learned about the GoFundMe site from watching YouTube videos. He decided to start his own campaign on June 30. His GoFundMe page quite adorably outlines all the reasons Kamden needs a new chair: "His wheelchair has fallen forward many times and that sucks. Also, he has a really hard time pushing it because its so heavy. But do you even know what's worse than that? His wheelchair is too big for him to fit in his bathroom. He can't even fit through the door and use the toilet without asking for help. If he gets a new wheelchair he's going to be more comfortable and he'll do more things on his own. I think he would go super fast if he got this new chair and we can play more."

In just one month, the page surpassed its goal of \$3,900, raising \$6,325. As a result, Houshan was able to get a brand new, significantly lighter wheelchair in August. Houshan's mother was beyond grateful for what Paul was able to accomplish. "Paul is really just a sweet kid," she said. "I just couldn't believe it. Who would have thought? I never guessed it would be like this, not in a million years."

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