



Goodness of America

Random Kindness, Freezing Weather, Warm Hearts

When New Jersey was pummeled by winter storm Quinn in early March, many residents were left without power. And while some local companies might have seen the outages as a prime opportunity to garner new business, one man, Andrew Van Jura IV, owner of the family-run Quality Comfort Heating and Cooling business in Somersville, New Jersey, decided he did not want to take advantage of others' hardships to earn money.

"Because of the unfortunate situation [put] on the community, between losing power and going through another storm ... I am providing free labor to repair anyone's gas/propane furnace that breaks as a result of the power outage and surge. I believe in helping my community in need and it's my pleasure," Van Jura shared on a community Facebook group page the day before the winter storm hit.

"I will get your family through it [by] helping with damage control," he added.

There were, of course, some exceptions to the offer. Customers were responsible for the cost of parts, for example. Overall, however, many residents benefited from Van Jura's kindness. He wired furnaces to portable generators, fixed units that were broken by power surges, and extended phone support to customers in need.

Jenni Morenius of Califon, New Jersey, was grateful for Van Jura's generosity. "On his way home from work, he stopped at my house while I was at work and hardwired the generator to my furnace for me," Morenius said. "He also left me some extension cords so I could run my fridge and a small light. After I got my power back, he again came back and helped me take the generator off the furnace and also moved the generator from outside in to the garage for me."

Van Jura also helped Tom McDermott of Bedminster by replacing the ignitor on a furnace at his home. McDermott told MyCentralJersey.com that Van Jura was "very professional and very pleasant."

On his way to a service call on March 7, Van Jura even stopped to assist an elderly man who was stranded on the side of the road. "He was stuck in the middle of the road," Van Jura said. "He went up a hill in a little pickup truck that had no four-wheel drive and got stuck. He was putting salt down and trying to get his truck up the road."

"He was cold, tired and panting heavy. He was about to have a heart attack. I offered to use chains and get him up the hill, which I did. He was so grateful."

According to LifeZette, Van Jura is no stranger to good deeds. He is a member of the Somerville Elks Club, where he is actively involved in outreach and good causes. When asked what compelled him to offer his services for free, Van Jura told MyCentralJersey.com, "I just wanted to get out and help people. I wanted to donate my time."

A Surprise Text Message

When Tony Wood received an accidental text from a young lady named Syd on March 8, he could not have expected the wonderful ways in which his life would change.

According to Good News Network, Syd had been trying on dresses at a dress shop and decided she



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needed a second opinion. She snapped a photo of herself and attempted to text it to a friend, but her text reached Wood of Spring Hill, Tennessee, instead.

Wood responded kindly. “I believe this message was intended for someone else. My wife isn’t home, so I couldn’t get her opinion, but the kids and I think you look stunning in your dress! You should definitely go with that one!” Accompanying his text was a photo of five of Wood’s children giving a thumbs-up.

Syd was moved by the jovial response, and when she told her friend whom she originally intended to text, her friend posted the exchange on Facebook. It immediately went viral.

Social-media users took a closer look at the people behind the kind photo and did some sleuthing. They found out that both Wood’s wife and his son Kaizler were missing from the thumbs-up photo because they were at a chemo clinic when the photo was taken.

Tony Wood posted a snippet of Kaizler’s story on the website Love What Matters: “The day before Christmas Eve, we were told our little boy has Leukemia. There have been some major trials since then. Several bouts of pneumonia hospitalizations due to low IGG levels, silent seizures which led to him being life-flighted back in 2016. Through it all though, we know God is with us. He has shown himself to us on several occasions, and we trust that He will pull us through.”

Kaizler’s family has been trying to raise money, but the last donation they received came four months before they received Syd’s random text.

But once users discovered the family needed help, they posted the link to a fundraising page on social media, and the donations began to pour in.

“Some Twitter users joined my son’s Facebook group and took the initiative to post the GoFundMe link themselves,” Wood told Good News Network. “It has been insane! The last I checked we’ve had over \$19,000 donated since this all started.” By March 20, the page raised over \$50,000, far surpassing its goal of \$10,000.

Donors offered kind words with their donations, while others begrudged a healthcare system that would allow a family to have to worry about finances during such a tumultuous time. However, Wood wanted to set the record straight. “I saw some comments on various articles where people were talking about how awful it was that we had to worry about this situation due to our healthcare system,” Wood explained in a YouTube video. “When we were at Children’s Mercy, their setup combined with Medicaid has taken care of all of our medical expenses in that regard.”

He explained that their financial struggles come from “loss of time at work, travel, and all the other myriad expenses associated with fighting this disease.”

Regardless, the Wood family is beyond grateful for the outpouring of support they’ve received from generous donors.

— Raven Clabough



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