



## **The Goodness of America**

### **And Then There Were Six**

Each time police officers put on their uniforms and go out into the public to serve and protect, they have already committed a heroic act, but what Officer Jesse Whitten of California's Santa Rosa Police Department did goes far beyond what anyone would expect from a police officer. Of course, if you ask him, he's the lucky one!

Officer Whitten developed something of a friendship with a homeless female drug addict whom he would often check in on while on duty. Last year, Whitten ran into the woman while out with his wife, Ashley, and the two noticed that the woman was pregnant. They engaged in a conversation about motherhood and then parted ways. Six months later, Whitten and his wife were shocked to receive a call from the woman during which she told them that she wanted the couple to adopt her newborn baby. Without hesitation, and despite already having three other children, the Whittens accepted.

The baby, Harlow Masie, had been exposed to drugs while in her mother's womb and reportedly overcame many obstacles in the first few weeks of her life, CBS News reported. But she is now thriving and very happy.

"She smiles so beautifully," said Jesse.

"Her smile is the best thing," Ashley added.

The couple saw the homeless woman in August during the process of officially adopting her baby, and the meeting was quite emotional. "We were talking and -- I was saying to her -- 'You made this choice for her and that we are so grateful,'" Ashley said. "And she said -- 'You're her mother now.'"

### **Free Tuition**

Not once but twice this year, Dennis Frandsen, a successful banker in Wisconsin, offered to pay the college tuition for a group of high-school seniors. This time, the offer was extended to the prospective high-school graduates at Luck Public Schools in Luck, Wisconsin.

CNN reported that the students were informed of the offer by Principal Brad Werner at a September 4 back-to-school assembly. "It was a fun experience for me to share this experience with the seniors and watch their faces and their eyeballs get big," he said.

Born on a dairy farm outside Luck, Frandsen never attended college. Today, he owns several companies in the region, as well as one of Luck's two banks.

Werner was taken aback by Frandsen's kind offer. "He just showed up and set the offer on the table for us. It's almost mind boggling to think that that's just come through, out of the blue, and is an opportunity for our kids," Werner said.

Frandsen and Werner are hopeful that the offer will motivate the students to stay the course and work hard. "It's a unique boost to our student body as a whole, not just our senior class," Werner said.

This is the second time that Frandsen has made this generous offer. Earlier this year, as the 2017-2018 school year neared its end, Frandsen offered to pay for tuition at Pine Technical and Community College in Pine City, Wisconsin, for graduates at Rush City High School. Frandsen was inspired to send



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students to Pine Technical after he visited the school and was impressed by what it had to offer. “I thought it was the right thing to do,” he told KARE 11 at the time. “I was able to do it and why shouldn’t I.”

At least 25 of the 59 graduates accepted Frandsen’s offer to attend Pine Technical. Some students even changed their plans to attend a four-year school following graduation after learning of Frandsen’s offer.

Abbey Moe, for example, originally planned to start school at Minnesota State University, Mankato, but instead decided to complete her basic classes at Pine before transferring to a four-year college later, KARE 11 reported.

“Obviously going for free is a lot different than spending \$20,000 a year at Mankato,” Moe said.

Another student, Brody Wolf, did not intend to attend college until Frandsen’s offer. “I really didn’t want to go through school loans and paying all that off,” Wolf said. “It’s huge, I’m so happy that this happened.”

Frandsen contends that there are already a lot of scholarship opportunities for students headed to four-year colleges, but not nearly as many for those interested in attending vocational schools. He also notes that there is a shortage of skilled workers such as electricians and plumbers.

Frandsen so enjoys paying tuition for graduates that he has started the Frandsen Family Foundation, which will pay college tuition for students in small towns, he told KARE.

## **A Teacher for Life**

Though it had been three years since high-school teacher LaShonda Carter had Larresha Plummer in her class at Harper High School in Chicago, Carter responded immediately when Plummer needed help.

Carter was perusing her social-media feed one late night at the end of August when she received a message from Plummer, now 18. Plummer had planned to attend a job fair in the morning but was unsure of what to do with her brand-new baby. She did not want to bring the three-week-old infant on public transit, fearing it was an unhealthy environment, and did not have someone to babysit.

“There was no way I would have let her take a baby in a bus, I told her right away that I would pick her up in the morning,” Carter told CNN. Carter not only offered to transport Plummer to the fair, but offered to sit in the car with the baby while Plummer networked.

Beyond that, Carter posted a live Facebook video requesting donations for the young mother and her new baby. “Sometimes as a teacher, our jobs go beyond the classroom.... She’s a young teenage mom, and she needs some help,” said Carter. “I’m gonna do what I can, as much as I can as an educator, but know I can’t do it all by myself.”

Carter told CNN that Plummer has now found a job and plans to attend college.

Carter is also hopeful that her story will help others to see Chicago in a more positive light and motivate people to do more good deeds. “Because of the murder rate in Chicago, we have such a bad reputation, but we can’t be afraid to help others,” Carter said. “I believe every day, we get the opportunity to be someone’s miracle.”

— Raven Clabough



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