



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on November 19, 2018

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Goodness of America

Waitress to the Rescue

Toddlers are not easy, and no one knows that better than Courtney Ruth Pedigo of Randleman, North Carolina. Pedigo was at an Olive Garden with her father, stepmother, and 18-month-old daughter, Harlynn, on October 1 when Harlynn began to get fussy. It was not long before Pedigo became overwhelmed, but fortunately, a waitress came in and saved the day.

“Just like any toddler, she didn’t want to be held.... It was just a constant battle to try to get her to chill out and I didn’t want to bother anybody trying to eat dinner,” Pedigo told CBS News. “She did everything but sit in her high chair and eat her dinner like I picture in my dreams.”

After a while, Pedigo decided that she was going to take her food and eat it in the car with the baby so that her parents could stay and enjoy the remainder of their meal in peace. She approached her server, Nianni Rudder, to ask for a to-go box but was surprised by Rudder’s response. “No, she’s not bothering anybody,” Rudder told Pedigo, as she recalled to CBS News. “You’re going to go over there, you’re going to enjoy your dinner with your family, and I’m going to be over there in a second.”

Rudder then approached the family with a vanilla ice cream sundae and proceeded to feed the toddler while Pedigo continued to enjoy her meal, which she joyfully discovered was “still hot.” Rudder kept Harlynn entertained throughout the remainder of the meal, and wiped Harlynn’s hands and mouth each time she became messy.

“She sat there and was feeding her ice cream and wiping her mouth and her hands — because of course Harlynn was digging into the bowl. She was awesome,” the grateful mom said about Rudder.

Meanwhile, the family got to know Rudder through the meal and learned that she was in school full-time to become an anesthesiologist. She was also still struggling with the loss of her mother, who passed away two years before.

“You never know what people are going through,” Pedigo told CBS News. “She’s just such a strong person.”

The family was so impressed with the incredible woman Rudder was and her kindness in helping to keep Harlynn entertained while they enjoyed their dinner, Pedigo later posted on Facebook praise for Rudder’s good deed.

“Girl, you will never truly know how appreciative I am for tonight,” wrote Pedigo. “I seriously admire you, not only because you took the time to bribe my bratty little human with sweets so I could eat, but because you are so so strong! I know your mom is looking down from Heaven with the BIGGEST smile [because she is] so incredibly proud of the woman you are.”

Pedigo continued: “I aspire to be the go-getter you are, and like I told my dad on our way home, it has to take someone with a strong heart and mind to do what you do because I know I couldn’t! Thank you for your amazing service and for being so kind to us all!”

Two Pizzas Traveling 225 Miles

Eighteen-year-old Dalton Shaffer knew that pizza was exactly what the Morgans needed in their difficult



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time, and he thought nothing of driving three and a half hours to deliver it to them, in this extraordinary story of kindness out of Battle Creek, Michigan.

Julie and Rich Morgan were big fans of Steve's Pizza in Battle Creek when they lived there 25 years ago. They recently planned a trip to the area for Julie's birthday during which they intended to visit Steve's Pizza for some good food because the restaurant conjured up wonderful memories for the couple.

"We were young and money was tight, but every pay day, Rich would pick up Steve's Pizza for dinner," Julie wrote in a Facebook post. "I can't possibly describe how delicious this pizza is — but several moves and all these years later, it is still the gold standard and we've never found a better pizza yet. Rich has frequently critiqued other pizza as 'good, but it's no Steve's.'"

Unfortunately, just before their trip, Rich received a diagnosis of cancer that forced him into hospice. Julie's father, David Dalke, knew that the couple needed something to lift their spirits, so he contacted Steve's Pizza to ask if the restaurant could perhaps send a letter or give them a call to cheer them up. Dalton Shaffer answered the phone and wanted to do much more. Shaffer is the nephew of Jeremy Shaffer, owner of Steve's Pizza. He has been working there for two years and is one of the store's managers.

When Shaffer heard the Morgans' story and learned that they lived in Indianapolis, 225 miles away from Battle Creek, he asked Julie's father what type of pizza the couple liked. He then informed Julie's father that he would be delivering two pepperoni pizzas to the couple's house after the restaurant closed for the night, despite the restaurant's "no delivery" policy and in spite of the long distance.

After a three-and-a-half hour drive, Shaffer arrived at 2:30 in the morning on October 16 and delivered two pizzas to the family, told them they were in his prayers, and asked if there was any other way he could help.

Dalke offered to pay for Shaffer to spend the night in a local hotel, but he refused, explaining he had to work again the next day.

Julie posted a photo of the pizza on her Facebook page and lauded Shaffer with much-deserved praise, but the young man remained humble. When asked about his unbelievable good deed, he told the *Battle Creek Enquirer*, "I just wanted to make them happy."

Happy indeed. For the Morgan family, Dalton's act of kindness meant the world. "I am beyond overwhelmed and humbled by this act of genuine kindness. Dalton brought our family so much joy — and the best pizza in the world — at a really difficult time," Julie said.

Shaffer explained that he had no idea the story would become so big. "I wasn't going to tell anyone about it," Shaffer said. "I didn't even tell my uncle or anything when I left for Indiana."

"I just hope people could keep that family in mind and pray for them," he added.

— Raven Clabough



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