



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on February 18, 2019

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The Goodness of America

Blue Line Bears

Florida teen Megan O'Grady, 16, has started a nonprofit organization that is sure to put smiles on the faces of the families of fallen police officers: Blue Line Bears.

Blue Line Bears makes stuffed bears out of the uniform shirts of fallen officers. O'Grady herself sews and stuffs the bears and creates miniature versions of the uniforms, including the officers' names, badge numbers, and departments, ABC News reported. It takes O'Grady up to two days to complete each bear.

What's more, O'Grady actually delivers the bears to the families in person! At the start of the new year, O'Grady and her parents traveled to Denver to deliver the bears that she made for the family of Adams County Sheriff's Deputy Heath Gumm, 32, who was killed in January 2018 while on duty. She then posts photos of her with the families to whom she delivers bears on Blue Line Bears' Facebook page.

As the child of a police officer, O'Grady was inspired to make the bears two years ago after learning of the attack in Dallas that killed five police officers and wounded 12 others.

"I want them to be able to kind of hold a piece of their loved one again," she said, "because the shirts are obviously the most personal part of the job other than the badge itself."

O'Grady told CBS Denver that she decided to make bears because children love them and they are "ageless." She elaborated, "People still love them when they're like 80-something, so I wanted to do [what] people of all ages could love and hold."

Following the death of a police officer, O'Grady collects the officer's shirt from his or her department and begins working on a bear. O'Grady has made 454 bears and delivered them to 36 states.

"It has been an amazing year for not only me personally but for the development of Blue Line Bears," she said in a Facebook post on New Year's Eve. "I've been able to help so many families this year and just really push Blue Line Bears to be the best that it can be. I really look forward to this upcoming year and just further developing Blue Line Bears."

"Part of the reason that I started this was because there's such a negativity towards police.... It has really lifted my spirits knowing that there are so many people out there who really care about police."

The U.K. *Daily Mail* reported that while O'Grady relies on donations and other contributions, she never asks for money from the families she has supported with her bears.

O'Grady says that the "thin blue line community is stronger than any community out there." She is hopeful that her contribution is a reminder that there are a lot of people who care for and support law enforcement.

A Birthday to Remember

When WWII veteran Duane Sherman was preparing to turn 96 on December 30, 2018, he was saddened by the fact that he had so few friends with whom to celebrate. But all that changed when his daughter, Sue Morse, took to social media asking strangers to brighten her father's special day.

Newsweek reported that Sherman looks forward to the mail every day, so when December rolled



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around, he began asking his daughter what came in the mail, hoping he had received some birthday cards.

“Every day he said, ‘Oh have you checked the mail?’” said his daughter [in a report](#) by KCAL9 in Los Angeles. “To get something in the mail ... that, for him ... that’s special.”

But sadly, many of Sherman’s friends have passed away over the years, and so day after day, he was disappointed to find nothing in the mail.

“All my friends are gone,” Sherman said.

Morse decided to post something on social media in the hopes that it would bring in some birthday cards. She mentioned her father’s military service and that he was a Purple Heart recipient.

“We should all be very proud of their service and honor them in any way that we can,” she wrote.

Apparently, readers agreed. Morse’s post was shared, and before long, Sherman had received more than 50,000 cards and letters from strangers in all 50 states and across 10 countries.

Sherman and his daughter were overwhelmed by the response. “Well, I’ll have a hell of a time reading them,” Sherman joked in a video featured on KCBSTV.

Heroes Saving Heroes

When Starbucks barista Nicole McNeil of DuPont, Washington, learned that one of her regular customers, an Army veteran, had an incurable genetic condition that required him to have a kidney transplant, she and her husband stepped up to be the heroes the man needed.

Vince Villano had not been himself during his regular visits to the local Starbucks, and in January 2017, McNeil finally asked him what had him down.

“She’s a genuine, caring, inquisitive person,” Villano told *Inside Edition*. “She just said, ‘Hey, what’s going on? You look like [you’re] having a bad day.’”

He told her that he had life-threatening polycystic kidney disease and needed a transplant or he would require a lifetime of dialysis.

McNeil, a mother of three children, was saddened by Villano’s story and could not stop thinking about it the rest of her day. She went home and recounted the story to her husband, Justin, whose response was likely a shock. “I’ve got a kidney, you know, we could do this. I think I’m willing to do that,” Justin told his wife.

Justin immediately volunteered to be tested and was found to be a good match for Villano. The men began spending a lot of time together and learned they had a lot in common besides being donor matches — they were both Army veterans and enjoyed the outdoors.

In December of 2018, the men underwent surgery and the transplant was a success.

Villano remains stunned by the couple’s generosity and is thrilled with the budding friendship that he shares with them. “In general, having them as friends, family, I wouldn’t want it to not be this way,” Villano told KIRO. “I can’t imagine not having them in my life.”

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