



## **The Goodness of America**

### **The Bonus of a Lifetime**

A real estate company in Baltimore, Maryland, gave its employees a Christmas they will never forget.

At the December 7 employee Christmas party for St. John Properties, the company CEO announced that the 198 employees would be receiving a total of \$10 million in bonuses. According to Today.com, the amounts per employee varied depending on tenure, but on average, the bonus per employee was approximately \$50,000, with the highest bonus being \$270,000.

"I steer the boat but they're the ones that run the boat, they're the ones that make the boat go," Edward St. John, the company's founder and chairman, declared in a video that played after he made the announcement. "Without the team, we are nothing, we are absolutely nothing."

The employees were overwhelmed with joy when they received the news. "I was in shock. I'm still in shock," said Stanley Ches, a maintenance technician for the company who started at the company in 1981. "Everybody was shaking me down and giving me hugs."

Another employee said, "What happened tonight was magical."

A spokesperson for the company explained the bonuses were the result of the company reaching its goal of developing 20 million square feet in eight states. "To celebrate the achievement of our goal, we wanted to reward our employees in a big way that would make a significant impact on their lives," said St. John in a statement.

The bonuses will be distributed in January and will be paid in addition to the company's annual year-end bonus, CBS News reported.

St. John will not soon forget the emotions his announcement elicited from his staff. "Grown men were crying," St. John recalled to Today.com. "It was an unbelievable moment. There's no question."

### **Tin Man**

Four-year-old Elliott Wyche of Arlington, Texas, may have been born with half a heart, but he has all the love of someone born with millions of them.

Today.com related that Wyche, nicknamed "Tin Man," was diagnosed with hypoplastic left heart syndrome, a congenital condition causing the left side of his heart to be underdeveloped. At the tender age of four, Wyche has already undergone three open-heart surgeries.

Wyche's parents have documented his journey on Facebook because his condition is so severe that he was unable to have visitors for at least the first year of his life, and his parents wanted to give their family and friends a way to get to know their son. His parents explained on the page, "This page was created for friends and family, near and far, so that they may visit Tin Man here and get updates on his journey."

Understandably, Wyche's condition has resulted in an enormous financial burden for his family, resulting from medical bills and lost work hours, prompting kind-hearted individuals to reach out and offer to send him Christmas gifts, but Wyche had a better idea. He started a toy drive for the Santa Cop program run by the Arlington Police Department, and he accepted the generous offer of toys for his



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drive instead of for himself.

Elliott created a wishlist of toys on Amazon, which was then posted and shared by the police department on their Facebook page. "If you would like to do something special for Tin Man this holiday season, please consider purchasing an item from the wishlist below — giving him the wonderful experience of working with the Arlington Police Department and giving to children in need," the post read. "Each of the toys on the list is a gift that Elliott would be happy to give to another deserving child — all with the common theme of heroes or adventure of course."

The police department was in awe of Wyche's good heart. "He's going through so much, but he's giving back to show that not only are we heroes for some kids, but he's my hero!" Arlington officer Carla Strauser told NBCDFW.

Thanks to Elliott's incredible generosity, dozens of gifts were donated to the police department for Christmas.

The department wanted to repay Elliott's kindness, so they surprised him with a visit from the officers and a SWAT team, presented him with a police vest, and played with a remote-controlled robot used by the SWAT team.

Despite Elliott's condition, he is a happy child full of smiles. "My dad is the best, my mom is the best, and everyone that I know is the best," he declared.

## **Brother, Can We Lend a Hand?**

When a Waffle House employee was the only employee in the entire restaurant on November 3, customers jumped in to offer their assistance in this story out of Birmingham, Alabama.

In a statement provided to Today.com, Waffle House director of PR and external affairs Pat Warner explained Ben was left alone because of a scheduling conflict. "We had two associates scheduled to leave, however due to a communication mix-up, their relief did not show up promptly," the statement explained. "That left Ben, our cook, alone in the restaurant with hungry customers. He worked the grill and got the orders out."

It was clear to the customers in the restaurant that the lone employee, who was trying to serve nearly 30 people by himself after midnight, was overwhelmed.

Slowly, customers began jumping behind the counter to help him. One male grabbed an apron and began washing dishes. Customer Alison Stanley went and brewed coffee, despite wearing stiletto heels and a sequined dress. "I don't think it's anything special," Stanley said. "He needed help, so I got up and helped out."

Others bussed tables and began washing dishes.

Because of the kindness of the customers, Ben was able to focus on waiting tables and food preparation.

One witness, Ethan Crispo, was originally frustrated by the poor service until he realized Ben was the only employee in the restaurant, the *Washington Post* reported. He was so moved by the scene that was unfolding before him he decided to snap photos and post them on Facebook.

— Raven Clabough



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