



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on January 18, 2021

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## The Goodness of America

### “Christmas Spirit”

A Dairy Queen in Brainerd, Minnesota, became the scene of an epic 900-car pay-it-forward event that took place over the course of multiple days in December.

It began on December 3, when a kind stranger decided to pay the bill of the person behind him, ABC News reported.

General Manager Tina Jensen took the next person’s order, and when Jensen informed the driver that her order had already been paid for, that driver then decided to do the same for the car behind her.

Jensen recalled the woman’s surprise when she learned the vehicle in front of her paid her bill.

“She’s like ‘really, why would he do that?’ I said ‘we just have it every once in a while where someone will take care of the person behind them and today is your lucky day,’” the manager replied.

According to Jensen, it just kept going and going.

Assistant manager Sandra Quam told CBS News that the staff and customers became more encouraged as the numbers grew. “We started just asking and encouraging and letting them know, you know, ‘It’s been five cars, it’s been 15 cars, it’s been 30 cars,’” Quam recalled. “And you know, people started getting excited about it and it just continued.”

The last customer left \$10 to keep it going the next day, MSN reported. The next morning, the pay-it-forward chain resumed. In fact, the chain continued until Saturday, December 5 — two and a half days after it began.

“One lady, she was so excited, she threw us a 20 dollar bill almost in tears. ‘Are you serious. This is really going on?’ I said yep you are about 125 cars into it,” Jensen told KARE 11.

When all was said and done, more than 900 cars participated in the spontaneous event. More than \$10,000 in sales were transacted.

Jensen said it was the biggest pay-it-forward chain she ever witnessed, explaining that she has seen chains last as many as 15 to 20 cars, but never more. She told *Good Morning America* that it brought the staff at Dairy Queen so much joy to see such kindness.

### A Christmas to Remember

For Christmas, Capitol Hill Lutheran Church of Des Moines, Iowa, paid the medical debt of all Iowans in the state, totaling \$5 million.

According to the *Des Moines Register*, members of the Capitol Hill Lutheran Church congregation came up with the idea of paying off medical debt in the church’s community. Reverend Minna Bothwell reached out to RIP Medical Debt, a non-profit organization that purchases medical debt at a discount from collection agencies and abolishes it.

“We asked them how much money it would take to forgive all the medical debt in Polk County,” Bothwell told the *Des Moines Register*. “They responded, ‘With what you have, you could forgive debt in all of Iowa.’”



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With just \$8,000, the church was able to purchase \$5 million worth of medical debt in Iowa. Reverend Minna Bothwell told the *Des Moines Register* that the church “purchased all of Iowa’s medical debt that RIP had access to, a total of \$5 million. And we are going to forgive every cent of it.”

And with this debt paid, the church turned its attention to Missouri in the hopes of raising \$15,000 over the next three to four months. Once the goal is met, RIP Medical Debt will quickly purchase as many bundles of debt as possible, Bothwell explains. Families will be notified that their debts are forgiven within four to six weeks.

“2020 has been a rough year for everyone,” Bothwell told the *Register*. “Hopefully, when people receive this news, they start the year off better with a significant weight off their shoulders.”

## **Walmart Secret Santas**

Independent anonymous Secret Santas made Christmas extra special for shoppers at various Walmart locations throughout the country by covering the costs of their layaway items in December.

One Secret Santa paid nearly \$65,000 toward layaway items at a Bristol, Tennessee, Walmart, UPI reported. The Secret Santa instructed store employees to pass on this message to customers when they learned their items had been paid off: “I love you, God bless you, and Merry Christmas.”

Elsewhere in Tennessee, an anonymous person walked into the Oak Ridge Walmart and paid \$29,500 for the layaway balance at the store, WATE reported. The donation paid for a total of 141 layaway orders, according to a store spokesperson.

Lisa Seeber thought it was a joke when she heard her balance of \$164 had been paid. When she learned it was actually a generous donor who did it for her, she was overjoyed. “Things are always real tight for me and my husband. And I was kind of trying to figure out how I was going to pay this layaway out and then purchase the rest of the Christmas gifts that I need to get. And this really helped tremendously,” Seeber said.

“Whoever done that, I just really am appreciative. I pray that god blesses you abundantly,” Seeber added.

Another such Secret Santa paid for more than 300 layaway items at the Canton, Mississippi, Walmart.

One very happy customer told WLBT that the surprise gave her much-needed relief. “It means that I can hold off working on some days,” she said, thrilled that her son will be able to “get everything he asked for” this year.

The Canton location did not reveal the total cost of the items, but indicated it was sizeable. Walmart representative Brittany Hadley said there was extra money left after the items were paid off so they took the remainder and used it to make donations to two local toy drives and to Feed America.

In Gainesville, Florida, a man reportedly wearing dark glasses, a hoodie, and a surgical mask gave the store \$500 to pay off layaway items. He asked the store to convert the check into a gift card and used it to locate and pay off layaways comprised of toys, Fox 35 Orlando reported.

The man told employees he has been doing this for nearly 10 years and has traveled the country selecting random stores that offer layaway options.

Thank you to all the Secret Santas whose kindness this past Christmas helped families who really



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