

MERRY CHRISTMAS

from bethany house

2014 the season of love

The Holidays are upon us once again. With their approach, we learn more about the needs of friends, neighbors, and even strangers. We'd like to share an exciting and encouraging story about a young woman who completed the Bethany House program a number of years past and is now opening her home and heart to care for foster children. When Brittney came to Bethany House pregnant and discouraged, she wasn't thrilled about being a mom. She was frightened and unsure how she could possibly build a better future for her unborn child. Today, she not only has a hope and a future for herself and her eight year old son, Jeffrey, but she is also giving a great gift of love to others in need: hurting children who need shelter from life's storms. Here's Brittney's latest story:

"The summer of 2013, I had the privilege of meeting a little girl named Faith. She was ten years old and loved being at my house playing with the other kids. When she first asked to stay the night I finally spoke with her father for the first time over the phone. Her one night stay soon became weeks. One morning there was a knock on the door, and it was a police officer and a DHS caseworker looking for Faith. Her father was now an open DHS case and they were going to take her into custody. I had grown attached to Faith, as did my 8 year old son, so we were very torn to hear this. When the case worker asked if I would consider being Faith's safety provider, allowing her to stay with me temporarily, I did not hesitate. Faith was with me for the entire summer before she was able to be placed with her family. During this time I learned a lot about situations such as this and with my life experiences, including my time of growth at Bethany House, I decided that I wanted to make more of a difference. I knew that I belonged in social work and had been talking about going back to school for a while at this point, but this was what finally pushed me to take action.

Again, Summer of 2014. Jayden, a 4 year old little boy that has lived next door to me for the past three years, became another DHS case. He was running around the neighborhood in his underwear on a cold rainy day and was found by police. His mother struggles with a heroin addiction and was forced to look at her life and temporarily lost custody of her son Jayden. Unfortunately for Jayden he does not have much family. I had been a part of Jayden's life since shortly after he moved in. I babysat him often and he spent a lot of time at my house. So when the apartment manager informed DHS of this and they found that I had been a safety provider in the past, I was asked to take Jayden, and again I did so without hesitation. I was a safety provider for 3 months for Jayden when the state of Oregon took his mom to court and they took full custody of him. This is when they asked me to become certified so that he could continue to stay in my care. I jumped through the hoops, began the long list of classes, and did all that was required of me to be an officially certified foster parent.

Having Jayden in my home taught me so much more about myself, about life and what it is to give. I may not have much but sharing the gift of love, acceptance and caring for another holds no greater reward. I am thankful that I was able to be a part of these children's lives and give them a place to feel loved safe and above all else make them laugh and smile.

Since her time under Bethany House's care, Brittney has blossomed into a capable woman and mother, giving back what was so freely given to her. When you sponsor a Bethany House girl, or support our ministry, you impact lives far into the future. Bethany House actually assisted Brittney obtain the housing where she has been able to help children like Faith and Jayden. When she first moved there, she was thrilled to have a home. Now she opens her door to welcome others without a home of their own.



Who is hurting this holiday season?



Reading Brittney and Jeffrey's story, and seeing the smiling faces of her son and foster children, can make us forget there are women and children this holiday season who are hurting and haven't yet found their happy ending. We thought you might be interested in seeing the requests for help we receive every day. So many families need our support. The following two requests are actual emails. We have omitted names to maintain privacy.

My name is ... I am a single mother of 2 girls ages 9 and 10. I am currently 19 weeks pregnant with scoliosis and with nowhere to go. I am not on drugs and alcohol; I am just in a bad situation right now and need support to get back onto my feet. My belongings are in storage, which I am on the verge of losing due to lack of income. I have TANF, but without a car, and going place to place, the money only stretches so far. I have a domestic violence grant that will expire if we cannot find housing ASAP. I'm looking to find full time employment, and stability before my baby is born. I am a Christian, but lately I feel weak ... There has to be a blessing around the corner for my family with as much that we are going through. Please pray for me and my girls as we are learning to trust in the Lord with all our hearts and lean not unto our own understanding. If you have space available we would love to be a part of your program.

Hi my name is ... I currently live in in another state, and am at the end of my 2 years at a transitional housing program. I am a single mother of 3 and just found out I'm expecting a 4th. I don't see any other way but to push through and seek options for stability. I'm not sure what the qualifying criteria is for your program but I would like to find out more information please.

Friends, calls and emails like this come through every day. Helping pregnant women with children is our mission, and the need for our services never stop. We want you to know love is alive and well at Bethany House as we work hard every day to ensure hope, healing, and practical help is available to women and children in our community. **Great News! We helped locate housing for both families.**

Contact us and learn more:

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