



# the encouragement project

## the STORY BOARD

March 2018

ISSUE 17

### THE OPPORTUNITY TAKEN

I smelled him before I saw him. But I already knew he was there because his cart overflowing with garbage-bagged treasures was parked outside by the front door. His clothes were old and too baggy, and his pants had dirt down the legs, which made me wonder where he had slept the night before. I had just run in this store for a few things that we needed and I had a coupon to use. I checked out without seeing him a second time and walked out the door. I noticed his cart again as I left, which made me think about what I had. And what he didn't. And made me wish there was some way I could help him. I thought of the twenty that I had left in my wallet, and what it was needed for, and I went back in the store.

The cashier at the first register/return desk asked if she could help me. I said I had an unusual question, but that I hoped she could indeed help. I said that I had noticed a homeless man shopping in the store. I could tell she braced herself, ready for a complaint, which made me smile on the inside. She had no idea. I asked if she might be able to watch for him to come through the line, and apply the money I held out to her toward whatever it was he was getting. She looked confused and asked the girl next to her if that was ok. That girl mumbled something back and turned toward the manager who had just walked up. The manager just nodded with a look I can't describe. It was like she knew how much of a blessing it would be for the man and she was all for it. I thanked them and left, praying for this unknown-to-me man that Jesus loves.

As I drove away, I thought of how I struggle at times to trust that God takes care of all our needs. He always does, because He loves us. And I realized that He even takes care of the needs of people like this homeless man. God proved this by using me that day to help someone else. And I was deeply blessed.

I don't share this story to brag about a good deed. Far from it. I do it to encourage you that by giving your last dollar, or telling someone they are doing a good job, or sharing vegetables from your garden with a needy or lonely neighbor, or being kind when it's all too easy to be impatient, that you are being a vessel used by God to share His love. It might be just what someone needs. I am working on a personal challenge to give more than I think I have (time, money, effort) when God presents an opportunity. Would you join me?



*The King will reply, "Truly I tell you,  
whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."*

*Matthew 25:40*

## ALWAYS COLLECTING

We are fast collecting beautiful hats and scarves again this year, for which we are very excited and grateful! Even as the warm weather approaches, we are encouraging our knitters and crocheters to continue to make what you can so that when the cold weather comes again, we are prepared to give out a bountiful amount of warm items to kids and adults who need them! Want to help?



The stash of children's books that we have to share with needy kids is running low. Do you have any to pass along?! We have just given a stack of 7 boxes full of great adventures to an elementary school in a low income area that provides these reading materials to their kids to have at home for the summer. Each child gets to choose two or three books at the end of the school year from what is donated, and we are glad to be a part of their efforts!



*Each of you  
should use  
whatever  
gift you have  
received to  
serve others,  
as faithful  
stewards of  
God's grace  
in its various  
forms.*

*1 Peter 4:10*

## GRATEFUL HEARTS

One of the places we sent Hugs and Kisses to last year was Romania, where cold winters are harsh for families and young ones especially. We were recently sent a little album as a "thank you" with photos of some there who received hats and scarves from The Encouragement Project. Here are just a few of those pictures...



## LOOKING FOR HELP

The time has come to seek out a bit of practical help for The Project as it would be great to continue to grow in the way we spread the word about what we're doing, what is needed, and how people can get involved.

If you might have an hour or two of flexible volunteer time to spare time in a week, the desire to be an encouragement to others, and basic computer knowledge, please let Stephanie know! Conversations can then be had to see if this might be a good way for you to help us here at The Encouragement Project. Thanks!

**THE ENCOURAGEMENT PROJECT** is run solely with financial gifts and donations. We greatly appreciate your willingness to be a part of this team. The Encouragement Project is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All gifts are tax deductible.

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