

Dear Potential Supporter of Samaritan Ministries,

Years ago, I was married to a West Point graduate, and the mother of three amazing girls. We were an upper-middle-class family, and I was a stay-home wife and mother. I had exchanged my career for a husband and a family twelve years prior.

The day after Christmas, 2003, I awoke to find an email from my husband informing me that he had filed for divorce and that he was tired of the responsibilities of a family. In a moment, my world changed completely.

Four months later, the divorce was final and I was given the house, the camper, the mini-van, the furniture, the girls....*and* the bills. I got a fair amount of child support and alimony, but it was about 60% of what we had been living on as a family. The bills were not 60% of what they had been though. So, my dream home was put up for sale, along with the camper. The mortgage alone would use up all my income. So, for 3 months, while I fixed my home and realtors wandered in and out, I still continued to get the bills for all these things.

I had a baby that was less than 2 years old, and I had not worked in 12 years. My parents had done all they could to help me and the girls. I had a contract on my house, and had found another smaller, older home that needed a lot of repairs. I needed to close on my new home 2 days before I sold my old one so that we could move all of our things in time to sell the house. My parents scrounged up the 5% down I needed to close on my home, and I was to pay it back in 2 days. Everything went well, and we moved into our new home. Two days later, I went to the closing, exhausted, and overwhelmed. The buyer walked away because of a discrepancy with her bank. I was stuck! I now had 2 mortgages for the next 3 months, and couldn't afford the one before. I lived in a house that needed lots of work to make it a home, but I had no money for paint, or anything it needed. We were desperate.

A friend suggested I contact Samaritan Ministries for some assistance and some counseling. A few days later, I met with Lorraine. What a blessing she was in a world that seemed to be getting tougher every day. She listened patiently to my story. She empathized with my situation. She talked to me about how to change my life. She reviewed budgeting plans, and lent me books from her library. We talked about how she could help me get through the tough times. She gave me gift cards and school supplies for my three girls. She put me in contact with other resources in the community. She told me about the car clinics they were offering for free oil changes and to check my vehicle for problems. She truly set us back on our feet for a few months. In all the problems I had been faced with, trying to pay bills, and feed my girls, and make a home, and maintain my car, my emotional feelings had been set aside. Lorraine, allowed me a place to feel safe, and supported; something I had lost when my husband left. She and her staff were always available even if you only needed a friend.

By Christmas time, the following year, we had struggled through 12 months. Santa was due to arrive in a few weeks, and my credit cards were filled with necessities, and I was so worried about what our first Christmas without their Dad would be like. Lorraine called, as if to answer a prayer. She asked if we needed anything because she knew someone that wanted to help a family for Christmas. She asked for sizes and wish lists for my girls. I felt I couldn't accept this help, because all my life, I was the woman who adopted a family for Christmastime, and surely there were other people that needed it more. But Lorraine reminded me of the 'gift' of Christmas that

this woman wanted to give us. She reminded me that it was for the girls. So I graciously accepted.

There were so many presents for each of my girls, and a bag of things for me as well. It was a beautiful Christmas, thanks to Samaritan Ministries.

Over the years, Samaritan Ministries has helped us get through rough times. They have been there for support and encouragement. They gave us necessities, and gifts. But most of all, Lorraine encouraged me to change my future. She talked to me about college and a career. She asked me what I dreamed of becoming 4 years ago, and I had no answer. I had never aspired to be anything other than a mom and wife. But life demanded that I have a career to support my girls. Lorraine encouraged me to go to DBCC and the Woman's Center there and "just look around".

Four years later, I have graduated from college with an degree in Interpreting for the Deaf. I went part time, and we pinched pennies, but I actually have a college degree, and a real job. I am a wonderful role model to my three girls. I've shown them that a woman can be strong and can survive. I have a beautiful family, and we support and encourage each other. We are cheerleaders in life, and I know deep in my heart, that God sent Lorraine to me, to give me someone to lean on when I needed an angel by my side.

If it weren't for her help and guidance, we would not be where we are today. I pray that she continues to find the support from the community to continue to help woman like she helped me.

In Christ,

Catherine R.