

Years ago, I was married and the mother of three amazing girls. I lived in my dream home and owned a camper, a mini van, and a sports car. 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 my husband informed me that he was filling 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* many bills. I got a fair amount of child support and alimony, but it was not what we had been living on as a family. So, my dream home was put up for sale, along with the camper. For 3 months, while I fixed my home and realtors wandered in and out, I still continued to get the bills for the house.

Someone suggested I contact Samaritan Ministries for some assistance.. 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 my husband had stolen from me and the girls when he left. She and her staff were always available even if you only needed a friend.

As we transitioned to a one-parent family, Samaritan Ministries has helped us get through rough times. They have been there for support and encouragement. They gave us necessities, and gifts for the girls. 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, and I had no answer. I had never aspired to be anything other than a great 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".

I graduated from college with a 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. Isaiah 54:17 says "...no weapon formed against you will succeed". It has been a long and difficult battle to evolve into the independent woman that God has created me to be. But I have a beautiful family, and we support and encourage each other. We are each other's 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.

Christmas was approaching and we were struggling. 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 gave to other families for Christmas time, 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. A week later, Lorraine told me everything was ready to pick up. 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.

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.