



A Moose Christmas Story from Stephens City Lodge 2483

On Saturday Dec. 22nd, the Administrator of [Stephens City Lodge 2483](#), Jim Habel, went to work at the lodge a few hours before opening. Upon pulling into the parking lot, he noticed a woman in her car using her phone. Thinking she was just using our free wifi, he decided to go over and say hello. "Hi, can I help you?" She explained that she was here to pick up some toys for Toys for Tots. Knowing that we had already held our annual Toys for Tots fundraiser and the toys collected had been picked up, he asked her to wait a moment and he would go into the lodge and make a phone call. He called Kim, our WOTM organizer for the Toys for Tots fundraiser who explained that all of the toys had been picked up.

So the administrator went back out to this woman's car, but found her in tears. She then played the voicemail she was listening to when he had pulled up and it said that the order for her family was ready to be picked up. She said that she couldn't figure out what the correct address was from the recording but thought it was either 877 or 377 Fairfax Pike and couldn't find 877 so she hoped this would be the correct place. The administrator, realizing that she was actually a recipient, asked her to come into the lodge while he called Kim back to find out where the local pickup center for Toys for Tots was. The woman explained that she only had one hour to get back to her kids. He replied, "If you'll give me just 2 minutes of your time, I promise, your family will have a Merry Christmas."

After a quick phone call, it turns out that the correct address for the pickup location was 372 Fairfax Pike, directly across the street. But then the administrator asked how many kids she had. She explained she had four children aged 9, 7, 5 and 6 months, and that her husband had just died 3 months ago. The administrator said, "There's a reason why you came here this morning, and it's not by coincidence. Someone, somehow, had directed the two of us to be at the lodge this morning". He went on to explain that every year since our lodge opened 20 years ago, we have always helped out 4 or 5 families at Christmas and in fact he had just come from dropping off a gift of assistance to another family. Fortunately, he still had enough gift cards to help out one more family, so he gave her Walmart gift cards totaling \$300. This young mother was overcome with gratitude and could not stop saying "thank you and bless you and your members."

We try our best, all year long, to help out those in need. Whether it's the volunteer fire and rescue, high school seniors in need of college tuition assistance or a mother wondering how she'll make Christmas happen for her kids with just 3 days to go. This is why we are here. This is what we do. This is why we're, The Moose.

**From our lodge home to yours,
Merry Christmas**