



College of Osteopathic Medicine

8401 S. Chambers Road

Parker, CO 80134

Main: 720-875-2800

Fax: 720 -875-2875

January 6, 2010

Contact: Adrian Clark

720-875-2800 X2809

AClark@RockyVistaUniversity.org

RVU Students and Staff Help Create a Holiday Miracle

The end of the term was approaching and the medical students at RVUCOM had major examinations on the immediate horizon. In addition to studying, many students and also some faculty members were making plans to travel during the semester break from late December to early January. Some students were planning to use the break to return home or to visit friends or relatives during the holidays. Other students were just hoping for time to rest and recuperate after another grueling academic term.

The level of stress within the university was, perhaps, a little higher than normal. This was an environment when many students would logically choose to turn inward and strictly focus on what they needed to accomplish academically before the term concluded.

Yet, it was also within this same environment that some students decided it was the perfect time for them to focus their attention outside rather than inside. They decided it was time to think of someone other than themselves.

Elsewhere, in one of the Denver suburbs, the Jones (not their real name) family was in the midst of trying to deal with the latest in a series of major setbacks. Their 2001 minivan had been struck in a hit and run accident and the repair estimate was escalating as their mechanic discovered more and more service issues resulting from the collision. The cost to repair their aging vehicle had climbed beyond \$2,000 and every dollar of that amount would need to be spent in order to get the car running and back on the road again. For several very important reasons, the Jones family really needed their car.

Recently, daily life had become increasingly challenging for Deborah Jones and her three children. The youngest child, 6 year old Todd, was diagnosed months earlier with a form of leukemia and was initially given just weeks to live. Deborah had to quit work in order to care for him and the loss of the vehicle made it extremely difficult for her to transport him to the hospital to receive treatment. Fortunately, he had been responding well to treatment and appeared to be on the road to recovery. Now, with money becoming scarce, it was not only difficult to continue to get Todd to his chemotherapy treatments, it was becoming increasingly difficult to just put food on the table for her family. As far as Deborah Jones was concerned, the mechanic might just as well have been asking her for a million dollars to pay for the

repairs because she literally had no money and she had no idea how she would get the money. She was in a crisis mode.

As a single parent, Deborah Jones had become accustomed to making her own way in the world. It was tough but she and the kids were hanging on...barely. In spite of facing several critical emergencies, she had been able to handle the responsibilities of managing the family. But now, she had suddenly hit an insurmountable brick wall. There seemed to be no way around it and no way over it. She made telephone calls and personal visits to organizations she had hoped might be able to offer assistance including an organization called There With Care. This is how RVUCOM second-year students and There With Care volunteers, Aaron Craig and Angela Weller initially heard about the Jones and their challenges. Angela and Aaron took the initiative to visit the family and became acquainted with Deborah Jones and her children. A decision was quickly made to help the Jones.

Angela and Aaron recruited fellow classmates, Jamie Cohen and Jack Savino along with RVUCOM faculty member, Dr. Carolyn Glaubenslee. Together the group decided to see if the students and staff at RVUCOM would be willing to help the Jones pay for the repairs on their minivan. They decided to talk with the mechanic who was doing the work on the Jones' vehicle and he agreed to donate his labor if the group could raise money for the parts. They also made an appeal to RVU president, D. Robert Black who, generously decided that the school would match any donations that the group was able to collect from the students and staff. The group also contacted businesses in area where the Jones' live and received offers of merchandise discounts and other services to help the family.

In early December 2009, the group began to send out the first in a series of email solicitations to RVUCOM staff and students requesting donations to help the family get their car back on the road. The money began to pour in. They created an incentive that provided donors with an entry in a drawing for a spa visit. The spa visit was a donation from a local business. Then donations for the Jones family continued to flow. The generosity of RVU's students and staff was exceeding all expectations. In a little less than two weeks the group was able to collect more than \$4,600 in cash donations from the students and staff of RVUCOM. According to his agreement, RVU President Black added an additional \$4,600 to the collections.

With an incredible \$9,200 in total donations, the group was able to not only take care of the Jones' vehicle repairs but were also able to assist them with rent payments, furniture (they had no beds and little other furniture), household items, insurance, utilities, food, clothing and other important necessities. They were even able to purchase Christmas gifts for the children.

While those involved in the effort discount their particular contribution, due to the tireless commitment of a few caring individuals and the overwhelming generosity of many, the entire RVU community was able to be part of the creation of a true holiday miracle that significantly benefited the lives of a family in dire need of help.

#