

Crash victim remembered with random acts of kindness

October 30, 2009

SHREVEPORT, La. (ABP) — On Oct. 29 lawyers took cases *pro bono*, a man installed a water heater for a disabled man who previously showered on his back porch and a man stopping to give a stranded motorist a jump wound up replacing her battery. All were acts of kindness to mark what would have been the 13th birthday of a girl killed this summer by injuries received in a church-bus accident.

Maggie Lee for Good Day started early for Jinny Henson, with a TV interview about the event. It grew out of an Internet community that formed to pray for Hinson's daughter during her three-week struggle for life, mostly in an induced coma, that ended when doctors declared Maggie Lee Henson brain dead Aug. 2.

The day ended with a Maggie Lee for Good party at the family's church, First Baptist Church of Shreveport, La., which had to be moved to a basement due to tornado warnings. Local flooding stranded people at the church until a break in the weather after 10 p.m.

Maggie Lee Henson blushed on her 12th birthday last Oct. 29, when a cute waiter sang to her at an Olive Garden restaurant.

In between, Jinny Henson visited one school that held a food-and-clothing drive benefitting a downtown homeless ministry, another collecting used tennis shoes to recycle into a playground and a childhood-education center where Maggie Lee's seventh-grade classmates at [First Baptist Church](#)

[School](#) made and donated crafts.

She passed through a drive-through snack stand benefitting brain-injury patients in northwest Louisiana, and watched her son Jack, who just turned 11, as his class acted out his older sister's favorite books for younger students as their Maggie Lee for Good project.

Those good deeds were multiplied in communities across the United States and around the world, with nearly 18,000 people pledging to participate through a Facebook [group](#) and [website](#).

After Maggie Lee's death, an Arkansas woman who had started a Facebook group to pray for the Hensons after the July 12 crash suggested keeping the youngster's memory alive by soliciting 1,300 people to perform an act of kindness on her birthday. That goal was reached quickly, and Maggie Lee's mother decided to shoot for 13,000. That goal was surpassed by mid-October, and by the time Oct. 29 rolled around the number had grown to some 17,800 individuals.

Many participants reported their acts of kindness on the Maggie Lee for Good Facebook page.

One man got off work at 2 a.m. and a co-worker's car battery was dead. As he helped someone else, he said, he thought of Maggie Lee.

A woman who packs boxes each year with her daughter to send to Samaritan's Purse's Operation Christmas Child this year packed an extra one in honor of Maggie Lee. They plan to continue the practice every year.

One person bought lunch for someone who recently finished college but hasn't found a job.

A busy mom said she had been wanting for a long time to volunteer at a local food pantry, but because of her hectic schedule she never tried it. She

decided to do it Oct. 29.

A woman in Cincinnati said she always passes the same homeless people on the same street corners as she drives downtown, so Oct. 29 she brought them sack lunches and told them "This is from me and Maggie Lee." She said she made six lunches but wishes she had brought more and will continue doing it.

Margie Williams Sanders posted a note saying she made a donation in Maggie Lee's honor to a non-profit organization that helps children with special needs. "Knowing all too well what it feels like to have a life so tragically taken, my prayers are with you," she consoled the family. "It will be a year on Dec 19 that my 14-year-old daughter tragically passed from a freak accident. In March she would have been 15, and it was one of the most difficult days. We don't understand why these things happen, but I always say God has a plan. Maggie Lee, along with my daughter, is living it up in heaven right now. Happy Birthday, Maggie Lee!"

Penny Jetton Golden was driving her son to school and talking about his plans to tell his class about the day and make sure everyone did something nice for someone else. As she pulled up to the drive-through at Starbucks, the cashier told her, "The car in front of you paid for yours. It's Maggie Lee's birthday." The cashier went on to explain that it had been a chain reaction all morning — with customers paying for the orders of the people behind them.

Trey Randal honored Maggie Lee by donating blood for his first time ever. "They even signed me up to be a regular donor every 60 days, which is something I never would have decided to do on my own," he said.

Lorri Hester Williams and Meredith Bleasdel helped a friend decorate a huge space for an expected 100 guests for her husband's 40th birthday party. "It doesn't sound like much, but our friend has the flu, bronchitis and

a kidney infection and honestly didn't know how she and her Mom were going to get everything done," she said. "We had to skip our Bible study to do this, but we know that God was honored on this day as we remember Maggie Lee and all that she did good for others."

Jinny Henson said the stories amazed her family and made them grateful. "People have begun terming their good deeds, 'Maggie Lee,' as in, I did my 'Maggie Lee,' as a description of a good deed done in Christ's love," she said.

Maggie Lee's father, John Henson, an associate pastor at First Baptist Church in Shreveport, [used](#) part of the day to travel to Tyler, Texas, to take a bright pink flower arrangement to her grave, along with some flowers for his mother's grave as well.

"Today is a great day to let our good deeds show; to do things that make this world a better place; to help answer the prayer of Jesus for the Kingdom to come in this world as it is in Heaven," he wrote Oct. 29 on his [blog](#). "This is our way of joining up with God to bring good out of a horrible situation."

"I cannot begin to imagine why the accident happened and why Maggie Lee died and I certainly don't believe God caused it," he wrote. "What I do know and can see is how God has been at work to bring good out of it. 17,800 people doing good things is great evidence of that."

-Bob Allen is senior writer for Associated Baptist Press.

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['Maggie Lee for Good' project honors memory of girl killed in bus crash](#)

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