

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unaware. - Hebrews 13:2

"For some have entertained angels..." and SOME are ANGELS THEMSELVES!

by Rich Wampler, Editor


In the latter half of May, I was sitting in my easy chair looking through my afternoon mail. The usual bunch of bills and junk mail invaded my otherwise good evening. At the bottom of this pile of paper was a large envelope, in which were many items that literally changed my perspective on not only my life, but myself as well.

The first page was a letter written by one of the sweetest people I have ever come in contact with: Ms. Judy Hammett. Never having actually met her or her husband, I was plunged head-first into the wonderful life they have led. Looking through many enclosed articles written about their loving household and seeing the attached picture of them and their two beautiful adopted children raised emotions in me that I don't come as often as they should...those of thankfulness for my own family, and awe of someone who is truly blessed with abilities not bestowed on every person.



THE HAMMETTS

Ken, Judy, Shawnee (4) & Kimberly (2 1/2)



February 20, 1998

Ms. Judy Hammett
5324 O'Reilly Lane
Stone Mountain, Georgia 30088

Dear Ms. Hammett:

On behalf of the Board of Governors for the 11 Alive Community Service Awards, I congratulate you on being selected to receive a 1998 Community Service Award for your dedicated service to United Methodist Children's Home. You were selected from a large number of nominees who have given their time as volunteers in this community.

In addition to the 11 Alive Community Service Award, you will receive a Jefferson Award for Public Service from the American Institute for Public Service in Washington, D.C., and \$1,000 to donate to the charity of your choice.

Please mark your calendar for the winners reception to be held here at WKLA-TV, 1611 W. Peachtree Street, NE, on March 4, 1998 at 6 pm. Please call Sheryl Cimper at (404) 892-1611, ext. 200 to confirm your attendance. Staff members from 11 Alive will be in touch with you to videotape the segment of the awards program that highlights your volunteer service. Please feel free to bring a guest with you to the March 4 reception. At this time, we will also give you specific details about the 1998 11 Alive Community Service Awards. The program will be televised April 13 at 9 pm. This "live" television event will be held at the Cobb Galleria Center.

If you have questions, please feel free to call Sheryl Cimper at (404) 892-1611.

Again, congratulations!

Respectfully,
Robert J. Walker
President & General Manager
RWJ/mlab

In 1998 Ken nominated Judy for a community service award from the Channel 11 television station in Atlanta. She was chosen as one of 11 winners. She was also named a volunteer of the year by the Jefferson Group in Washington, D.C. As an award winner, Judy received \$1,000 to designate for a charity. She chose the United Methodist's Children's Home.

"I've done this so many years. This is the first time I've ever won anything. I had some reservations about accepting the award at first because of the negative stereotypes of Foster homes. This seems to be a way to portray them in a positive light," said Judy

While living in Alabama, Judy fostered 22 infants for Catholic Charities. After remarrying and moving to Stone Mountain, Georgia in 1994, she and Ken began fostering for United Methodist Children's Home. They have fostered 11 infants to date and presently have 5 in their home, ranging from 6 weeks to 4 years. They were, at the time the letter was written, in the process of adopting Shawnee (4) and Kimberly (2½). Both children were drug babies, born premature, and have many problems. They both have Cerebral Palsy and Kimberly also has Hydrocephalus and Microcephaly.

As you have probably guessed, Ken and Judy foster medically fragile children. These infants usually come into the Hammett's home with oxygen, feeding tubes (which Kimberly also has), tracheas, ventilators, etc., but according to Judy, they also bring with them a lot of love.

"Apnea monitors are going off during the night, feeding pumps are beeping, babies are crying to be held and/or fed and all the time we are smiling and thinking 'we would not have it any other way,'" writes Judy.

At present, they have infants in four different size diapers, three different formulas, feeding pumps, oxygen, breathing treatments, two on Apnea monitors and 10-12 doctors they see on a regular basis, along with 4 therapists that come to their home every week.

"This is what we do," writes Judy, "we foster those who need us the most, and no matter how much we put into it, we get much more in return. We could never give as much as we get."

On top of all of this, Ken and Judy get up every Sunday morning, get dressed, dress the children, and go to church. Rev. Bill McCoy, pastor of Stone Mountain United Methodist Church says he likes the Hammett's presence in church for a very practical reason. "Since I met them, I don't want anyone ever to tell me they can't come to church on Sunday mornings."

"I've seen a lot of dedicated folks, but they just about take the cake," he continued. "I couldn't do it, but I stand amazed, and in awe of them."

The last paragraph of Judy's letter was really what hit home with me more than any other...on top of everything else she does, she offered to help me in any way that she could. All I have to do is call.

Yes, some people entertain angels, but I know of two people who truly are angels themselves.