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# ANGEL SIGHTINGS:

7 Inspirational  
Stories about  
Everyday Angels  
on Earth



## ANGEL SIGHTINGS: WHAT IS AN ANGEL?



Sometimes an angel is a heavenly being doing God's work on earth. Heavenly angels come in many guises from helpful animals to mysterious strangers. They can come to us in dreams, on a breeze or in a strain of music. Here on earth we have another kind of angel. Earth angels are people who play angelic roles in the lives of those around them. We never know where an angel will appear, but one thing we do know: Angel sightings can—and do—happen anywhere.

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# ANGEL SIGHTINGS: THROUGH THE FLAMES

FIGHTING SMOKE AND FIRE, HER GUARDIAN ANGEL CAME TO HER RESCUE.

*By Dana Christmas*

**W**ay To Go!" I called to a friend down the hall. "Happy New Year!" Closing the door to my dorm room, I smiled, glad to be back at Seton Hall University. That January night we'd been celebrating a great beginning to the semester: Our basketball team had just beat our No. 1 rival, St. John's University. They'd always slammed us before, but that night we'd kicked their butts. "Yes!" I said, spinning around in my room, feeling triumphant.

I'd come back to campus after Christmas break at home with my family in Paterson, about 45 minutes away. Mom had wanted me to stay longer, as always, but I was excited to start the new semester. I was proud to be continuing a tradition at Seton Hall. My mom had gone there, as well as my godmother and my high school mentor. In a few months I'd graduate with a degree in criminal justice. College had gone by so fast, and being a senior seemed like a dream, especially since I was in Boland Hall, where I'd lived as a freshman. Now I was a resident manager, in charge of a hundred students in two wings of the dorm's third floor. I wasn't that much older, but I was like a den mother to these freshmen. Sometimes we'd talk in the lounge. They came to me for advice about school or dating, or just because they were lonely.

Some of them helped me too, setting an example with their strong faith. I'd always gone to church, but I didn't know God like some of those kids. "He's with us," Mom would say. "You can feel his spirit." I wished I could.

Still, I said my prayers. Where are you in my life, God? I wondered, all cozy in bed that night. It was quiet in the dorm. I knew my friends along the third floor were also settling in before classes the next day. And we even beat St. John's. "Yes!" I switched off the light. This was going to be a great new year.

The piercing whine of the fire alarm woke me. Oh, no, I thought, not again. We'd had so many false alarms that year I'd lost count. I couldn't let that stop me. It was still pitch-dark outside as I struggled out of bed. I knew most of the freshmen would turn over and go back to sleep, but it was my job to check if everything was all right. I stepped into the hall, and looked left, down the hall to our lounge. Flames blazed inside the lounge, and thick black smoke rolled through the doorway. I stood for a second in shock. This is a fire! This is real!

Panicked, I leaped back into my room. What do I do? I could open the window and jump. I could race down the stairs—one of four exit doors on the floor was next to my room. No! I have to help my friends. I ran into the smoky hall, screaming: "Fire!" My eyes stung with the smoke. "Fire!" I screamed again, hurrying past the lounge to the rooms beyond.

I pounded on doors along the hall. "Wake up! Get out! Fire!" Didn't anybody hear me? The smoke was choking me, and I stumbled back to my room, slamming the door. I gasped the clean air inside. My head hurt so much! My hair was sizzling. I rubbed at my scalp, trying to stop the burning. I pushed the window open. "Fire!" I screamed. "Please! Wake up!" Lights came on in windows around mine. Some kids were getting up! Thank God!

I had to go back to warn the others. A wall of smoke hit me in the face as I opened the door, but I ran past the lounge again. "Wake up!" I yelled, pounding like crazy on every room. Finally, doors began to open, and the kids ran toward the exits. The air was thick with smoke and screams. "Dana! You're on fire!" someone cried out.

I smacked wildly at the flames in my clothes and struggled once more to my room. A few gasps of air and I was back out in the hall. This time I turned right, pounding on doors in the other wing. "Fire!" I heard kids getting up. The smoke now covered everything like a stinking blanket. I couldn't see, but I heard kids stumbling toward the exits. My lungs burned. I couldn't stop crying. *Oh, God, help me. I'm so afraid.*

I made my way back to my room. There's clean air in there, I told myself. My hands hurt so much I couldn't feel the walls. My head throbbed. I reached the door, but my knees buckled. I had no strength left. I collapsed on the floor.

“Hold on.” A man was calling to me, his words drifting through the smoke like a fresh breeze. “I’m coming for you.” I glimpsed a flash of white. Then strong arms embraced me, lifting me, raising me up. As we moved slowly through the blackness I no longer felt pain. I couldn’t see him, but the man held me tight. I heard a door slam, and I felt us descending a stairway, escaping into the night. The cool air swept over me.

I don’t remember when I woke up, but my first thought was, *I have to get to class*. Pushing back the sheets on my bed, I groped for my sneakers.

“Dana!” my mother cried. “What are you doing?” She gently laid me down again, and I saw fear in her eyes. “Don’t you know what you’ve been through?” I realized I was in a hospital bed. Mom told me I’d been in critical condition for several weeks—and in an induced coma to help me heal. Worst of all, I learned many freshmen had been injured in the fire, and three of my friends on the third floor didn’t make it. “Everyone else got out, Dana,” Mom said. “You did everything you could.” Slowly I put the pieces back together again in my mind, all except one. My best friend told me later that the other kids thought I’d died in the fire. She saw me come down the steps to the first floor and walk out of the building alone.

“Walk?” I asked. Impossible. My doctor agreed. With the severity of my burns, I couldn’t have taken another step, he said. Certainly not three flights of stairs. When I told my mother how I’d escaped, she understood immediately. “You felt his spirit,” she said, and at last I knew where God was in my life. He was carrying me through it.

# ANGEL SIGHTINGS: RONALD McDONALD HOUSE

THIS EARTH ANGEL FOUND A SURPRISING WAY  
TO BE A HEALING ANGEL AS WELL.

*By Mary Cousineau*

It was strange being back at the Ronald McDonald House in Minnesota. For months my family had lived here while my nine-year-old brother, Evan, battled adrenoleukodystrophy, a condition that affected the adrenal glands and white matter of the brain. After Evan died we went home to California. Now, months later, my mom and I had returned to Minnesota to thank the hospital staff for all they'd done. Losing Evan still hurt so much. I'd hoped this trip would help me heal.

The doctors and nurses weren't the only ones I wanted to see during our visit. "Hi, Kelly!" I said to one of the residents from the Ronald McDonald House as I walked into the dialysis unit at the hospital. In the crib beside her was her two-year-old son who was a patient. Dominik's bright brown eyes were the same as ever. Unfortunately, so was his condition. Dominik was born with failing kidneys. Every day a dialysis machine filtered the impurities from his body. Kelly had donated one of her kidneys, but her son's body rejected the transplant.

Dominik blinked sleepily at us from the crib. He was tired from the dialysis.

We sat down to catch up. "Any luck finding a donor?" Mom asked Kelly.

She shook her head. Dominik's sister and brother were too young to donate, and Dominik's dad had been tested, but he wasn't a match. "All we can do is wait for an anonymous donor," Kelly said.

Waiting. My family knew too much about that. I was in my sophomore year of college at USC when my dad called to say Evan had had a seizure at swim practice and was rushed to the hospital. We'd come out to Minnesota so Evan could get a bone

marrow transplant. Doctors said that might keep him alive. I wasn't a match for Evan and neither were my parents or siblings. We were utterly helpless while the clock ticked against the child we loved so dearly.

Dominik sat quietly in his crib as we talked. I remembered the first time I'd seen him. It was in the kitchen at the Ronald McDonald House. Mom and I took turns cooking dinner and spending the night with Evan in his room at the hospital. That particular night was my turn to cook. I was standing at the stove when this little curly-haired boy toddled through the kitchen and down the hall to the playroom. I was so focused on Evan I barely noticed the other families in the house. But something about Dominik made me smile.

Evan got his transplant, but died a few months later from complications. I went back to USC, with Evan never far from my thoughts. And then Dominik was featured on a TV show. *Evan never got better*, I thought. *Dominik might not either*. There was nothing I could do for Evan now, but Dominik was still fighting for his life. When the show was over I e-mailed Kelly. "Maybe I should get tested to see if I can be a donor," I typed. "I know it sounds weird, but I feel like I could be a match."

"Mary, you need to think about yourself right now," she e-mailed back.

**K**elly was right. I switched off the computer. I needed to deal with my feelings over losing Evan. Besides, how did I think I could be a match for a little boy I didn't know? The odds were against it. Still the feeling continued to niggle at me every time I checked Kelly's web page for updates on Dominik's condition. Now, with Dominik sitting right before my eyes, the feeling was even stronger. I would have done anything to save my little brother, but there was nothing I could do. Not for Evan. But what about Dominik? How wonderful it would be to keep his family from experiencing the loss my family suffered. I'd felt helpless for so long. *Dear God*, I wondered, *is this an opportunity to stop that awful empty feeling?*

That night I told my mom I wanted to be tested as a donor for Dominik. After his one failed transplant there was only a three percent chance that anyone else would be compatible because new antibodies were created when his body rejected his mother's



organ. “When I look at Dominik, I think about Evan, how he was so hopeful right up until the end. His transplant donor was a big part of that. I think Evan would want me to try. I feel like God would want me to try too.”

Mom understood. In fact, she felt the same way. Before going back home to California we both got tested. We knew it was a long shot. We had nothing to lose.

A week later I was sitting in class listening to a lecture when my cell phone buzzed. The display showed I’d missed a call from the Minnesota area code. A second later a text came in from Mom: “OMG. The transplant center called. Check your voice mail.”

I called the center as soon as I got out of class. “You are one hundred percent compatible,” the transplant coordinator said. “You couldn’t be closer if you were Dominik’s sibling or even his identical twin.”

Although I knew I wanted to be a kidney donor, I didn’t know what the process entailed. I found out over the next few weeks. I took a lot of tests: X rays, an EKG, a CT scan. More importantly the doctors required a psychiatric evaluation. “We need to be sure you won’t blame yourself if the transplant doesn’t work,” the psychiatrist explained when I met with her. “Especially since you’ve just lost your brother.”

I knew I might not be able to save Dominik. I just wanted to try. Finally the doctors approved me for a transplant. They’d notified Kelly there was a potential donor. “The person is still unknown to us,” she wrote on her web page. “We can’t be sure until it’s official.” It was time to give her the news.

**I** bought a scrapbook at the campus bookstore. In it I pasted copies of my test results, e-mails of Kelly and me discussing Dominik’s search for a kidney, and Kelly’s updates about the mysterious donor. I also included the torn page from my school notebook where I’d jotted down the message from the transplant center. Then I sent the whole package to Kelly.

A few days later, exactly a year since Dad called with the bad news about Evan, I sat at my computer to watch Kelly on the webcam as she opened the scrapbook for the first time. She flipped through the pages, not understanding what it all meant. Not until she got to the last page, where I wrote in big letters: I

AM THE DONOR.

“Mary!” Kelly yelled. Then she started to cry. “I can’t believe it!”

She brought the computer to the hospital where Dominik was having his dialysis. “Who will give you a kidney?” his father said on the webcam.

“Mary!” Dominik shouted.

“And where’s that new kidney going to go when you get it?” asked Kelly.

Dominik pulled up his shirt and pointed to himself. “In my belly!”

Three weeks later Dominik had a new kidney. This time his body didn’t reject it. The doctors called it a perfect fit. And me? Naturally, I still miss my brother and I always will, but I’ve gone from feeling helpless to healed.

# ANGEL SIGHTINGS: VIETNAM

EVEN IN VIETNAM, GUARDIAN ANGELS WERE WATCHING OVER HIM.

*By Michael Herrera*

Vietnam was called the land that God forgot. I sure saw the truth of that, serving as a combat medic in the late 1960s. My first nine months of duty were spent taking care of casualties choppered in to Landing Zone Sally, a base north of Hue. At 20 I'd seen more suffering and death than I'd ever imagined possible. A man's life had no meaning here. How could I still believe in a God who cared about us, a God who cared about me?

In October 1968, I was transferred from LZ Sally to the First Cavalry Division headquarters at An Khe in the central highlands. An Khe was a huge base camp with an airfield, post exchanges, a commissary and clubs for officers and enlisted men—a far cry from the Spartan existence at LZ Sally, where we'd lived in underground bunkers. The war was still everywhere around us.

But at An Khe I felt more like a human being again.

My company patrolled outside the base in the daytime, searching for mortar tubes, rounds and rockets. At night we pulled guard duty on the perimeter. There were machine guns on towers at different intervals, and sandbagged foxholes in between. We were reinforced with more troops and a Quad 50—four .50-caliber machine guns mounted on a flatbed truck. The crew fired rounds into the field to discourage ground assaults from the Vietcong. It seemed we were no closer to peace than the moment we'd arrived.

I spent my free time at the enlisted men's club on base. One night I walked in, and there was this all-American guy standing on a chair, lip-synching to a song on the jukebox about losing his girl. He was so into it I had to laugh. "That's Tom," one of the GIs clued me in.

Later a buddy introduced us, and Tom and I hit it off right from the start. He showed me a picture of his girl back home. "We're

getting married,” he said proudly. Then he grinned, pulling more pictures of pretty women from his wallet. “Now what’ll I do with all these?” he asked. “Just a joke, kid,” Tom said. “I finally found love, and it beats all.”

Tom had a free spirit that seemed to rise above the grim reality around us. “When this is over, I want you to come meet my folks,” he said once, throwing his arm around my shoulder like a brother. Tom made me feel good about life again. We hung out at the club, where Tom would lip-synch till the crowd went wild. “Go, Tom!” we’d yell. No matter what we’d been through out on the perimeter, Tom’s antics never failed to cheer us up.

Tom was only two years older than me, already a seasoned grunt. He’d spent time in another line unit before coming to An Khe. One night I saw him in action. Our company was on the perimeter, and it was really bad. The Vietcong were out in force. Enemy tracers bounced off a bunker about 100 yards to our left. The Quad 50 was nowhere in sight. We returned fire. Tom manned an M-60 machine gun. I handled the M-79 grenade launcher.

**N**othing seemed to stop the advance of the Vietcong. “We need air support!” Tom yelled. He was totally focused, rounds blazing from his M-60. The sight of him filled me with confidence. We were fighting for our lives, all of us together. I had to do what I could to help. *God, don’t let me make a mistake.* I grabbed the radio. I shouted into the mouthpiece for air support. In minutes, there was a roaring whoop-whoop-whoop overhead, and two Cobra assault helicopters appeared. Machine gun and rocket fire streamed from the two choppers, strafing the enemy. Thunderous cheers erupted. The Cong were routed.

Seven months later the entire division was deployed to another tactical zone. Our rifle company was disbanded, and all grunts were reassigned to other units. I was going to finish my tour of duty with a medical company in Phuoc Vinh, north of Saigon. A gang of us got together at the club to say good-bye. Tom was his usual happy-go-lucky self, but he’d been assigned to the thick of combat. I told him I was worried. He brushed it aside. “This is the kid,” he shouted to everyone, smiling in my direction, “and the kid is going home!”

Soon he’d be going home too, and his plans for the future made

me believe that there would be life—a good life—after the war. His dad had a job waiting for him in the family business, and his girl was planning their wedding. Tom took me aside at the party. “I want you to be my best man,” he said. I got kind of choked up. “You’re family now,” Tom said, reaching around my shoulder, hugging me close. We promised to keep in touch through in-country mail.

At the clinic in Phuoc Vinh, I took care of casualties coming in from the field. Every day I worried about Tom. I dreaded unzipping body bags, fearing I might see his face. Whenever I got a letter from him, I breathed a sigh of relief. “Keep smiling, kid,” he’d write. Or, “Counting the days till we’re both back home.” But after a couple months, his letters stopped coming.

In July 1969 I was choppered down to the airbase at Bien Hoa to process out. Standing in line for my papers, I spotted a buddy from the old rifle company. We chatted for a bit. Then he mentioned Tom. “He sure was a great guy,” he said. I backed away, stunned. Was? I don’t believe it. I had to find out for myself. I went to the warehouses where personnel records were kept.

“I want to see the killed-in-action list,” I said to a GI at the desk. “Sure,” the soldier said. “Who you lookin’ for?”

I spelled out Tom’s name, and in moments the GI pulled out a 3x5 card. “Here you go,” he said. I stopped breathing. Not Tom. Not Tom. I left the soldier holding the index card, and stumbled out, lost in the land that God forgot.

**I** don’t know how long I wandered around the base, but I found myself in an empty parking lot, telephone poles lying flat on the ground to designate spaces for military vehicles. I sank down on one of the poles. My heart was heavy, my mind filled with memories of my buddy Tom. “You’re family,” he’d said, hugging me close. Tom had everything to live for. What did I have? All the hope he’d given me seemed to have died with him out there on the battlefield.

Taking a deep breath, I raised my head and wiped tears from my eyes. I was startled to see a figure moving toward me. In seconds he was standing in front of me. Other figures appeared to my left and right, wearing flowing robes. Some of them sat

alongside me on the telephone pole.

The figure in front of me knelt, putting his hand on mine. The others put their arms around my shoulders, just as my comrade Tom once had. But who were these comforters? My body relaxed, and I no longer felt as if I carried the weight of my sorrow by myself. Then I realized what was happening. Angels. I grasped the hand of the one in front of me and looked around at the others. Their concern for my well-being, their sadness for my loss and for the horrors of Vietnam were almost palpable.

“Thank you,” I whispered, slowly rising to my feet. The angels vanished as suddenly as they’d appeared, but I knew God had not forgotten this land torn by war, any more than he’d forgotten me.

The angels he sent that day are with me still. I’m not saying that life has been easy for me in the years since I returned home. But when things seem their worst, I remember how much God has given me. He sent Tom to give me hope during wartime, then angels to give me hope for a lifetime.

## ANGEL SIGHTINGS: IN THE O.R.

REFLECTED IN THE HOSPITAL WINDOW WERE DOZENS OF HEALING ANGELS

By Carol Sanzone

Childhood Sweethearts, Joe and I had always taken care of each other. But I couldn't do much to comfort him when his stomach cancer progressed to the point where he could no longer digest food. A central line would be inserted in a vein near his heart to give him the nutrients he needed. "He'll be awake during the procedure," the surgeon said. "If you stay you must be very quiet. Or else you'll have to go."

I sat in the lounge chair in the corner. The surgeon covered Joe with a sterile sheet and started the procedure. Joe winced. Instinctively I moved to comfort him but caught myself. *If you interfere they'll make you leave.*

But I couldn't bear to watch Joe suffer and turned toward the window. The doctors and nurses were reflected clearly in it. Joe moaned softly. *Lord, he's in pain.* My eyes welled with tears and I shut them tight. *Please comfort Joe.*

I opened my eyes and looked back at the window. In the reflection I saw Joe and the doctors—and something more. Angels. The room was full of them! Bright, white figures glided over Joe and swooped in and out around the staff. I turned my head to see them, but they were only visible in the reflection of the window.

When the procedure was over I got up and stroked Joe's forehead. "That wasn't so bad," Joe said. I couldn't always comfort him, but God could.

# ANGEL SIGHTINGS: IN THE BEDROOM

A HEALING ANGEL COMFORTS A NEW MOTHER-TO-BE

By Tracy Rafferty

**M**y husband found me in a puddle of a half a dozen broken eggs on the kitchen floor. “What happened?” he asked.

“I dropped them,” I said, sobbing. “Can’t you see?”

Todd threw up his hands. He’d tried to understand me, but he couldn’t. Six months pregnant, I overreacted to everything, sometimes bursting into tears for no apparent reason. Todd and I had been high-school sweethearts, and we were happy about our first baby, but we were only 20 years old. It was all too new and overwhelming. We both had full-time jobs, and Todd often worked late, so I was frequently at home alone. I’d always been a bit of a worrywart, and my pregnancy had increased my anxiety to the point of lunacy. Hard as I tried, I couldn’t seem to help it. “Did I leave the coffee pot on?” I’d ask, running back into the house to check. “Is the front door locked?” I’d wonder in the middle of the night.

I worried all the time, especially about my baby. The media made things worse. Every television show I watched and every magazine I read seemed to highlight the very things that scared me. Premature birth. Sudden infant death syndrome. Birth defects. I peppered my doctor with questions during my regular checkups. “Hormonal changes heighten feelings of anxiety,” he’d tell me. “Try to relax.” *Easy for him to say*, I thought. How could a woman enjoy being pregnant with all that could go wrong? Then one day his secretary pointed out the overdue balance on our bill. Todd and I made monthly payments, as much as we could afford. *Why this? Why now? How many more things do I have to worry about?*

Todd wasn’t home when I got there. I made some chocolate milk and put my feet up on the couch. Why couldn’t I relax? “Why?” I asked. “Please, God, why? I should be happy about the



baby, but all I do is worry.”

I talked about everything—my baby’s health, my loneliness when Todd was gone, our jobs, the doctor bill—everything. “I’m afraid,” I said at last. “No one can help me but you.” I sighed with relief. I felt like a burden had been lifted from my shoulders. I was relaxed when Todd got home from work.

I drifted off to sleep that night feeling a bit less anxious, as if a blanket of calm had settled over me. Then something woke me. A man stood at my bedside. Why is Todd up? I wondered, rubbing my eyes. But it wasn’t Todd. In the moonlight filtering through the bedroom curtains I saw a man dressed in white. I was startled, but not afraid.

**T**he man had short auburn hair, and freckles sprinkled across his smooth face. Gentle warmth radiated from his eyes. He was young, about my age, but somehow seemed a hundred years older than me. I couldn’t stop looking at him, but I slowly reached under the covers to wake my sleeping husband. *I want Todd to see him too.* I had the sense the man understood what I was thinking, because he looked at me with the hint of a smile. Todd didn’t budge. When I turned back, the man in white was gone. I tried telling Todd what I’d seen, but he only nodded and went back to sleep. I lay there for a while, thinking of my visitor, hoping he would return. I thought of his smile, and my cheeks trembled with a smile of my own. I’m happy, I realized. God knew all my worries, all my fears. He had sent an angel to comfort me.

The next evening Grandma and Grandpa called. They had been discussing a gift for the baby, and decided to send us a check instead. The amount was just what we needed to catch up on our doctor’s bill. The relief of this worry seemed to lessen all the others.

My baby is 17 now, one of two beautiful daughters Todd and I have been blessed with. Over the years worry has tried to creep back in. When it does, I think of the mirthful smile of the freckle-faced angel who stood by me one night long ago. I know he stands by me today.

# ANGEL SIGHTINGS: AT SCHOOL

THE LITTLEST ANGEL EARNED HER WINGS WITH  
A HEAVENLY MESSAGE OF LOVE

*By Ken Rokusek*

Valentine's Day was around the corner. For my daughter, Becky Hallstrom, that meant a party for the kindergarten class she taught. "They're really looking forward to it," she told me over the phone one evening. "Especially the valentines exchange. The kids are filling their cards out all by themselves."

"That's a lot of writing," I said.

"Yep. One card for every student in the class. Guaranteed."

Becky's words might have sounded casual, but she knew they were important for me to hear. She knew the story all too well. The story of another valentine exchange long ago.

My mind drifted back. I was a student not much older than Becky's kindergarteners. In the 1940s at a public school in Chicago, Illinois, my teacher announced a party. "On Valentine's Day we give cards to those we care about." She placed a big wooden box on the corner of her desk.

My friends and I sat up in our chairs for a better look. The box was decorated with paper hearts and lace, and there was a narrow slit in the top, kind of like a mailbox.

"You can put valentines for your friends in the box," the teacher said. "As many as you want. I knew we'd have lots so I got a big box to hold them. At the party we'll open up the box and deliver the cards. Doesn't that sound fun?"

We all nodded. Some of the girls giggled and whispered to each other. I was more interested in the party. Cookies! I didn't see how a valentine's box could beat that.

All week the box took up space on the teacher's desk, a reminder of its importance. Students dropped envelopes inside here and there. The girls liked to make a big deal of it when they dropped in a fat pile, one card at a time to make sure the event

was noticed by the whole class. I dropped a couple in for my friends. Why not? It was Valentine's Day.

The party, when the day finally arrived, did not disappoint. There was punch and heart-shaped cookies. I was feeling pretty good about this Valentine's Day stuff as I sat at my desk and enjoyed the snacks. At her desk, our teacher opened the box and started passing out the little envelopes inside. I waited at my desk, wondering who had sent one to me.

The girls oohed and aahed as they received theirs. The boys mostly played it cool, with a friendly elbow jab of thanks. I played it cool too, waiting at my desk. *Maybe mine are at the bottom*, I thought as the girl across the aisle from me added yet another card to her pile. The teacher moved toward me, her hands full of envelopes. I sat up straight, ready to accept her delivery, but she handed a card to the boy behind me. I took a gulp of my punch, hoping no one had noticed. As I chatted with friends, I kept one eye on the teacher, checking on her progress. The box was now empty, and there were only a couple of cards left in her hand. *Just let me get at least one*, I thought.

**T**he teacher went back to her desk. She put the box away for next year.

I hadn't gotten a single valentine. Nobody wanted to give me a card? I thought. Not one person?

"Hey, Ken didn't get any!" one of my friends called out.

I waved him away. "A good thing too. Nobody better be giving me some lacy heart card! Valentines are strictly for girls."

My friends laughed as I crunched into my cookie. What did I need with a card, after all? I had friends. I didn't need a valentine to tell me so. It didn't matter. I just put on my tough face and wore it the rest of the day. What else could I do? I wasn't about to cry at school. But years later memories of that party did bring tears to my eyes.

"You know, Becky," I said. "I've had over sixty Valentine's Days since then, and that's still probably the one I remember most." No matter how many years went by, that tiny wound in my heart always stung a little. I guess part of me would always be waiting for that valentine. *Just let me get at least one*.

"I always tell my class that story, Dad," Becky said. "They're

surprised that someone your age can still feel hurt about something that happened when he was a kid.”

“I wouldn’t have believed it either, back then,” I said. “I knew nobody was trying to hurt my feelings, especially my friends. I just got overlooked. Maybe they thought a boy like me didn’t want a valentine. After all, even I didn’t seem to know just how much I wanted one!”

“That’s what I explained to them, Dad. It’s an important lesson for them to learn, how we can hurt people by things we don’t do as much as with the things we do.”

I hung up the phone more proud of Becky than ever. Maybe that awful Valentine’s Day party was worth it if she could use it to teach so many children about kindness and keep other kids from feeling the way I did that day so many years ago.

On the fourteenth, Becky called me when she got home from school. “The party was a great success,” she reported. “I got some good cards this year. And I even put a surprise in the mail for you.”

“For me?” I said. “Becky, you didn’t have to send me a valentine.”

“I didn’t,” she said. “When I told your story to the class, I wanted them to think about their classmate’s feelings. But for one student that was just the beginning. I won’t say any more right now, Dad. I don’t want to ruin the surprise. Just keep an eye on your mailbox.”

A couple days later a tiny envelope arrived addressed to me. Inside was a funny little card, the kind kids give to each other these days. Not the homemade kind we used to pass out. This one was clearly store-bought. But the careful printing by a child’s own hand made the card unique. This card was meant for one person and one person only, to make him feel special. “To Mrs. Hallstrom’s Dad. Love, Olivia.”

Now this would be the Valentine’s Day I’d remember forever. Thanks, Olivia, for the best valentine ever.

## ANGEL SIGHTINGS: AT THE DENTIST

WHAT BETTER PLACE FOR A LITTLE GIRL TO MEET HER GUARDIAN ANGEL?

*By Donna Clark Goodrich*

**E**ver since a stay in the hospital, my granddaughter, Lindsay, had been afraid of doctors. I worried about her trip to the dentist. “She’s a brave six-year-old, Lord,” I prayed. “Please send her an angel for comfort.”

Her father called me afterward. “She wasn’t scared at all,” Ned said.

*Prayer answered*, I thought.

“But on the way home she asked about the little boy who sat by her feet and said not to be afraid. There was no boy in the office.”

Prayer answered exactly!

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