

Thank You!

As we approach the holiday season, I can't help but to reflect on how grateful I am to oversee Clubhouse for the last three decades. I have been blessed to work with and donate to a mission that impacts the lives of such a diverse range of teens, children, and their families. One family that comes to mind is the Damico family. Through a Northridge Schools referral Jenny Damico, guardian of five grandchildren aged 1-11, found Clubhouse. Here is their story:

Meet...

The Damico Family

Hello, let me share a few things about our family. My name is Jenny and I have been with my husband since I was 17. I'm almost 50 now. Just like the song, "God Only Knows," is how our life has been. We did not expect in our 40's that we would be raising five grandchildren. We have a 3-bedroom home we bought in 2005. Needless to say, we are a full house! My youngest daughter also lives with us, so that's eight people in our home. Last year, we became guardians of our newborn grandson when he was released from the ICU as an NAS (Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome) baby. Only God knows our struggles. Now Clubhouse knows them too.

The girls receive therapy through school, and that is how I was referred to Fort McKinley Clubhouse. I heard it was teens helping kids and a faith-oriented place to send your children. At the time, I had no idea how wonderful it was going to be. Having the girls have a place to go after school has been amazing. It allows them time to unwind and join in with the fun and learning activities. To see other teens give up their time to make them feel special is always a plus.

I have seen positive changes in the girls' lives. The girls are 11, 9, 7 and 5. The 11yr old goes to Teen-in-Training meetings and is growing in self-leadership. I've seen her become more independent and an inspiration to others. She's not the quiet sit-in-the-corner person she used to be. That is because of the individual care from Clubhouse teen leaders.

The 9-year-old recently won her school's student achievement award. She has the most difficult time dealing with early childhood neglect. I have seen her outbursts become less frequent. I have seen her want to help others. I have seen her give up something she wanted and give to her younger sister. If one of her sisters is ill and misses Clubhouse, she asks for extra snacks and activities for her sister. The thoughtfulness of her caring heart is because of Clubhouse teens.

When I reach out for help from Clubhouse, I find understanding and prayer, plus material items like school supplies and clothing. Not just for the girls, but for the baby as well.



With four girls in school, I would have not been able to have everything they needed without the help of community and Clubhouse. I am so proud to have so many caring people in our lives. Clubhouse has invited the kids to a Christmas party, which the girls are excited to attend. I get phone calls asking how the girls are doing and updates on upcoming weeks. I see the smiles when my girls go into Clubhouse and when they come out. They are proud and filled with excitement.

Thank you, Clubhouse, for your support and continuous encouragement. It is a good feeling to know you are there. Not for just the girls, but the entire family. Spreading and showing love is what our community needs to continue to grow strong. We are a stronger family having such caring people in our lives. You may call yourself Clubhouse, but you are much more than that. You are changing lives and touching more hearts than you can imagine. Thank you from the girls and me. We love you!

Today I'm asking you to please consider helping more families like the Damicos by making a gift of \$90 or more to Clubhouse. Your gift will provide teens with leadership opportunities and provide at-risk kids with a safe place to go after school, where they will learn lessons that will last a lifetime. You can make your gift on the enclosed card or the listed online link.

Together in Making a Difference through Young Lives.
Grateful for your faithfulness,



Cheryl Bender

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P.S. Have you heard I'm retiring after 30+ years as Executive Director?

For updates on this God movement check out dreambuildersgroup.org.

