

The Golden Rule Relief Fund at Work



Caption: Armed with a Warrior Spirit, Dawn finished chemotherapy in August. In honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, associates can participate in virtual walks with the American Cancer Society. [Click here to create or join a team.](#)

When Dawn Pickens discovered she had breast cancer last February, she didn't immediately tell her fellow JCPenney associates. A part-time cashier at Store 2270 in Heath, Ohio, Dawn also holds a full-time job at a local bank. Even there, she opted to keep the news to herself for a while, secretly crying at her desk and wondering if she was going to live.

"You know something's wrong when the doctor says, 'I think you better come back,'" Dawn said. "It takes a while to accept it and to decide to fight."

A single mother of three, Dawn knew the disease ran in her family since both her mother and aunt received the same diagnosis. What she didn't expect was that her cancer is what they call "triple-negative," which is more aggressive than other forms. In March, Dawn underwent a double mastectomy and began chemotherapy in May.

"The surgery probably wasn't the hardest thing, it was the chemo," Dawn said.

Not to mention the fact that Dawn quickly found herself without any vacation time at her full-time gig since she used it all for her surgery and chemotherapy treatments. And for Dawn, that meant any additional time she took off would be without pay, something she just couldn't afford to do.

That's when the night manager at Store 2270, Ashley Tigner, mentioned something she thought might be able to help. **A Little Help From My Friends**

At JCPenney, the Golden Rule Relief Fund (GRRF) is a way the Company provides emergency relief to fellow associates who have experienced financial hardships beyond their control. Funded by donations from associates, the resource is available to full-time and part-time associates, so long as they're actively employed by JCPenney.

"I was skeptical," Dawn said. "I didn't think my story was hardship enough. I figured since I still had a job, JCPenney was going to just say, 'Sorry about your luck.'"

That wasn't the case, though. After what Dawn describes as a really easy application process, the GRRF grant was used to cover some of Dawn's house payments and hospital bills. "It didn't take long after I applied," she said. "I was just amazed because I had been robbing Peter to pay Paul. It was just a godsend."

How the GRRF Works

A grant from the GRRF can be administered to associates if their emergency falls into one of six qualifying events: disaster (declared or natural), flood, fire, crime, medical condition or a death in the family. Like Dawn mentioned, the process is fairly simple and includes only light paperwork and documentation. You can read more about it [here](#).

"It wasn't difficult, that's why I thought it wasn't going to work!" Dawn said. "I couldn't believe it was for real."

For associates who want to help out fellow team members like Dawn, you can make a donation to the GRRF by visiting Associate Kiosk > My Money > My Giving > Payroll Giving. Associates can also give donations at the register in support of GRRF. And Dawn has a message for those of you who are so inclined.

"Thank you, thank you, thank you," she says. "Thank God there's still people out there like you."