

# Give What You Have

Agnes. W. Thomas told the story of what happened when her next-door neighbor died and left a 14-year-old daughter named Amy, who was often alone when her father was at work.

“Amy spent much of her after-school time in my apartment,” Ms. Thomas said, “so I decided to teach her how to crochet.

“Over the years, we spent many happy hours together as we worked. One Christmas, we called a local nursing home and asked if they had any residents who would not be receiving gifts at Christmas. Amy and I took our crocheted lap robes to these people on Christmas Eve.”



The following year, Amy married and moved away. “Later, when she came back to our area with her beautiful, red-haired baby girl, she called and asked if I planned to visit the nursing home on Christmas Eve,” Ms. Thomas said.

“‘I want to be with you,’ she told me, ‘but I don’t have any gifts to take them.’ ‘That’s all right,’ I said, ‘you can help me take mine.’ ‘No, I have a better idea,’ Amy said, ‘I’ll take my greatest treasure – my baby.’”

That decision was a hit. “Great merriment appeared on the faces of the elderly people when we walked into the room with that beautiful baby,” Ms. Thomas said. “The reactions were: ‘Oh, she looks just like my daughter did when she was a baby,’ exclaimed one of the residents. ‘May I hold her?’ asked another. Jennifer was passed around like a doll. That baby brought more joy and laughter than all my crocheted lap robes. Amy was happy, too.

“‘They really liked my baby, didn’t they?’ she asked as we left the building. ‘To make people happy, I guess you just give what you have.’”

How true. The human spirit is encouraged by the love and concern of another person, and what could be more encouraging and delightful to the elderly than holding an innocent baby?

In Life Care and Century Park, we see the love for children on the faces of our residents. Interaction with a child is a real gift, any time of the year.

But there are other special gifts we give as well – hugs, laughter, attention, time, a listening ear, encouragement and prayers.

As Amy put it, you just give what you have.

– Beecher Hunter