

Dear Be the Gift and Madwire staff,

Tis the season to be thankful and I wanted to let you know how thankful I am for both Be the Gift and Madwire and each and every one of you. As we enter the holiday season I wanted to share the impact you have had on my son's and my life.

Our (super-fast) story:

When I had my son, Ty, in 2011 I already knew that his father did not want to be involved and I would be raising our son alone. When Ty was 2 I joined Project Self-Sufficiency which is a program that encourages single parents to go back to school to receive their bachelor's degree so they do not have to depend on government assistance. Pretty cool right?! I chose to quit my full time job and go back to school. It was the scariest decision I have ever made but in the end it was the best decision.

Fast forward a few years to Christmas 2016. I was in my senior year at CSU, working an internship, and being a sole provider for my now 5 year old. I didn't qualify for a scholarship that I had been counting on so money was incredibly tight, and here I had a little boy that asked every Santa he saw for a Hot wheels Criss-Cross Crash. Of course he wants a \$50 toy! Why can't he just ask for a few hot wheel cars? So, I started to explain to him that Santa was really busy this year and the elves had gone on strike, and lets ask Santa to go visit all the kids that don't have toys, and I think Santa is in rehab for eating too many cookies, and I'm pretty sure his sleigh broke down and Christmas isn't about gifts, it's about being together... Basically the kid needed to understand that if Santa came he would not be getting some crazy expensive toy!

That was until the Be the Gift/ Madwire Santa showed up and not only made this little boys dream come true (through the gift card provided) but gave him everything else that was on his list! Along with that, I was showered with love! As a single mom, the last thing we expect is anything for us. I was in tears! And every time I put the earrings on or had to use the batteries that I received I thought of you all. (Thank you Team Charlie).

May 2017, I graduated from CSU with my Bachelor's in Business Administration. (Woo Hoo!) A week before graduation I found out I did not get the job I had been interning at. (boo hoo!) Month after month, application after application went by and I still had not found a job. As the holiday season came up and not having money to pay the bills and knowing that I had to be out of my apartment by March, I fell into a deep depression. I was ready to give up on everything. I wanted to close my eyes and wake up after the holidays. That was until Be the Gift and Madwire brought the spirit of the holiday season back to me.

Once again Ty received everything he wanted but I was speechless when I saw what you did for me. The one and only thing I truly needed was a vacuum but those are so expensive that I thought I'd put a few other less expensive things on the list. The last thing I expected was to actually get a vacuum along with everything else I asked for! The laundry soap surprisingly lasted us almost all year, the gift cards were a true life saver at that time of the year, and the kitchen stuff was amazing! Once again I was in tears. Knowing that complete strangers would spend their time and money on me and my son brought me out of the dark place that I was in and gave me hope.

I was blessed with a job at CSU at the beginning of this year but unfortunately we had to move out of the apartment complex where we were living. After having a few struggling months of couch surfing and not having a place to live this summer, I realized that Be the Gift and Madwire were not just 'Christmas gifts' but instead a gift from God. Through every struggle Ty and I have been through the past couple years, I find myself thinking of you and your generosity all year long.

So what I want you to know is that, as you prepare to bless the next person this holiday season, you are not just helping them for that month but you are impacting their lives for a lifetime. I thank God every day that you came into our lives and we will be forever grateful for each of you and your companies. Have a wonderful holiday season and God Bless!

Love,
Brandee and Ty

