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Good Works!



Dear Reader:

I know we've got a ways to go before Thanksgiving turns our collective attention toward an attitude of gratitude, but I don't want to wait to publicly thank reader Glenda Abbey for making my world a lot nicer.

A military wife who's spent the last five years living in El Paso, Texas, Glenda was on her way home to Billings, Montana when she read about my quest to replace my much loved travel tote. Frequent fliers will recall that I've been lamenting the eminent demise of a bag no longer in production. For the past 13 years, I've been cramming a week's worth of living into the 10" x 13" x 8.5" Ricardo of Beverly Hills Renegade. I dreaded the day when its sides finally ruptured. (I also ranted about the public's love affair with rollerbags. But I've said enough about that!) Like me, Glenda had obtained a Renegade as part of a set of matched luggage. A rollerbag aficionado, she'd rarely used her tote. It was in excellent shape, so she packed it up and sent it to me. How nice is that? Her kind gesture made me think about other people who see needs—large and small—and step up to meet them.

One of those people is Monterey, California's Linda Ford. For several months, I've been shuffling her info around on my desk. Unlike most of our stories, hers is not about the fun things to see and do along the SkyWest route map. It doesn't tell readers of a community winning awards for its extraordinary lifestyle or thriving business environment. But it does fit this magazine's mandate to share good news about the people and places SkyWest Airlines serves.

As president and CEO of the Natividad Medical Foundation, Linda Ford became concerned about the growing number of working but still poor women with fibroid tumors and prolapsed uteruses who receive a diagnosis requiring costly surgery and then never see their doctor again. To help needy, uninsured



Some of the women who have purchased the Onyx Fund necklace to help uninsured working women obtain needed surgeries gather around fund creator and jewelry designer Linda Ford (back left). To learn more visit theonyxfund.com.

women receive critical care she created the Onyx Fund. It's named for Onix, a woman who had been a full-time housekeeper in Carmel, California for nine years when she was told she needed surgery to remove massive fibroid tumors. Without insurance and unable to qualify for assistance, Onix ignored the diagnosis and kept working even though she was in severe pain. Four years passed before her condition became so debilitating that she again sought medical help. It took her an added six months to save and borrow the down payment for her surgery.

Ford, a jewelry designer, was so moved by the plight of Onix and other "disappearing patients" that she created a special onyx necklace that sells for \$125. One hundred dollars of the purchase price goes to fund surgeries. The community embraced her idea and in just 30 days the Onyx Fund raised \$30,000. Those monies will help a dozen women receive surgery. The fund hopes to raise more than \$1 million to assist countless others.

Linda Ford and Glenda Abbott both inspire me to look for ways to make other people happy. I hope they motivate you as well. I am convinced that we can all do good somehow, some way today. Air travel poses plenty of opportunities to lend a hand to your fellow passengers. If all you can share is a smile that's enough. I have a feeling you'll figure out how to do much more. Then tell me about your experiences. I'll share some of the most heart warming in the next issue.

Happy Skies,

Colleen Birch Maile
Editor in Chief