

## **My Personal Ministry**

a testimony by Lucienne Billings

Name >> *Lucienne Billings*

Connection >> *sharing center partner*

Medium >> *testimony*

“The Lord never gives you more than you can handle” is a saying I grew up with, and believing it has made me a survivor of many bumpy roads. In order to learn anything in life, you must look for and learn from the good, even in the worst times. Such journeys have brought special people into my life.

In May of 2002, I learned I had qualified to buy a home, so my two sons and I were very joyful as we set out on a vacation trip after a long, hard year. It was a gorgeous day for a drive, even on 436! Soon, traffic came to a halt. We learned later there was a bad accident two miles ahead, but now we were stopped in the left lane when suddenly a car plowed into the back of ours – a split-second that changed my life forever.

Severe back injuries put me out of work nearly six months, and it is still painful to perform simple tasks, such as making a bed or mopping a floor. During that long summer and fall, my travels were limited to the doctor and physical therapy. I was medicated, picked, probed, x-rayed and injected with more medication. I couldn't see all the bumpy roads ahead; I was just grateful that my auto insurance paid three months partial salary and that I knew how to budget.

One morning, coming home from a painful physical therapy session, I lay down for a nap, only to be jolted awake by a fire alarm and panicked children running above me. Water poured into my apartment. The kids had set off the sprinkler system! My boys and I were now out of a home as well as Mom being out of work. The little savings we had left paid for a hotel while our apartment was dried and cleaned. Thankfully, we were able to return after a week, but I could not afford renters insurance, and the boys' beds and clothing, paddle fans and loads of other things were a total loss.

Now I truly did not have a dime to my name. September's rent arrived with an eviction letter. I asked for an extension and asked my doctor to release me to light duty work. I worked 28 part-time hours but didn't foresee red tape and wrangling between insurance companies, resulting in my working 5 weeks without pay. When the check came, it was only for 70% of the 28 hours.

During this time I prayed a lot and called many charitable organizations, but no one could help. The State denied assistance because I made too much money *when* I worked. There was one more agency on my list: The Christian Sharing Center. Here's where I met some of those special people. I took all my documentation to meet with Case Director Chris Lutz. After hearing “no” so many times, I could hardly believe she was saying “yes.” The Sharing Center didn't have funds to pay all my rent, but could pay some. Help from them and a couple of true friends kept a roof over our heads for another month. I walked out of the center with bags of food and toiletries, items I needed but was ashamed to ask for and would have done without. The funds helped tremendously, but remembering the friendliness and giving spirit makes The Sharing Center dear to me today.

So many people in our community need help, just as I did. I am blessed that help was there for me through The Sharing Center, and I feel even more blessed that I am now able to help the Center help other people. Turning my love for arts & crafts into a small Web business, I was able to raise funds for the Center last Christmas, and also saw my message and decorative plates go as far away as England and the Netherlands!

You know, I seem to be traveling farther these days than I ever thought possible! I thank the Lord for the mysterious ways He has worked for good in my life journey.

*Lucienne was able to buy a small house, where she works on her arts & crafts. See her decorative plates at [www.craftsbylucienne.com](http://www.craftsbylucienne.com). Hear her video testimony at [www.thesharingcenter.org](http://www.thesharingcenter.org).*

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