

The Last Christmas Goat

by Shari Tvrdik

The jeep was packed with the frozen goats that we had yet to deliver to our families. Goats are a beautiful gift especially if you're a Mongolian.

In America, we started a tradition of dropping off gifts late at night to families that were struggling and it was the best night of the Christmas season.



This was the first Christmas season, however, that we have delivered frozen goats.

Our last family of the day was a widow that we have been working with. Her son is the only one working, he is sixteen years old. The widow has been recovering from a knife attack that left her for dead. We found the widow and her son back in October, when they were living in a shed. Tonight we were visiting their ger that friends from home helped them to rent.

We arrived just as night had come and the sun was gone, along with it's warmth. When we entered the widow's ger it was toasty warm. She had a huge smile when she saw the goat, but then the emotions from deep within prevented her from speaking much. She was more than grateful.

A family back in the USA donated money to us to buy coal and wood for a month for this family. Their donation was also a beautiful gift on this sub-zero night.

As the widow sat on the edge of the bed she expressed her thankful heart. "I have warmth, and food, and shelter...I am so thankful."

I asked her if there were any other pressing needs. She said, "I just need one thing, if you have it..." then she reached under her bed and pulled out a pair of shoes. They were light summer sneakers. Both soles were split apart at the bottom, leaving big holes. She said, "I don't know how much longer these will hold...."

When I looked in her eyes I reacted as usual. I put myself in her place. I wondered...how can she keep going? Would I be so strong?

I had a box full of shoes from the USA. The widow and her son now have two pairs each. One pair of dress shoes, and one pair of super warm boots.





The son works at the wood market each day. He walks down there and spends the day collecting scraps of wood and tries to sell them. When I have seen this sixteen year old boy he has had his head hung low and looked like the world was on his shoulders...because it was.

Yesterday I was driving by the wood market and a young man with a pep in his step walked in front of my car. I hardly recognized him. He had a big smile on his face and was wearing a jacket that was sent from home...which is how I recognized that it was actually him.

I've said it a million times to my friends, "it does not take a lot to change a life." Its a giant mistake to think that we have to do something big to make a real change. That lie will only paralyze us into not moving at all...

Who is drowning around you today? You know who they are...go now and bring some peace...even if it seems a small gesture to you.

And remember, if you wait until your own needs are met before you give, you will miss the greatest blessing.

Merry Christmas!

Shari & Troy Tvrdik
Trevor, Sarah, Josiah, Elly
UlaanBaatar, Mongolia



The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy;
I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

John 10:10

www.ccwm.org