

Dear Seawolf Krewe,

I've been a foster parent for two and a half years now — and for the last two of those years, your organization has been by my side. I want you to know something, and I say this with complete honesty: I'm not sure I would've made it this far without Seawolf Privateers.

Fostering is beautiful, yes — but it's also overwhelming, heartbreaking, and exhausting. When a child shows up at my door in the middle of the night with nothing but fear in their eyes and the weight of the world on their tiny shoulders... it's easy to feel like I'm not enough. Like I'm not equipped. Like I'm drowning.

And then, Seawolf Privateers showed up.

I don't think you realize how truly impactful they are. So today, I want to share just a few of the things they've done that have made all the difference — not just for my foster children, but for me.

Two years ago, I had a sibling group that I took in. The oldest girl was used to raising the younger ones. She was the mom in the family. She was 14 yrs old. She had no self esteem, no worth, no value in her own eyes. She existed to watch out for the little ones. She was thin and didn't take good care of herself. When they arrived, I made a quick list of the items they would need and asked her what she needed for herself. She rambled off a quick list to me, all items the brother and sisters needed, and nothing for herself. I don't think she knew how to ask for something she needed and I don't think she knew how to want anything for herself.

When I reached out to Cayti and told her of the new placements, she immediately asked what our needs were. I gave her a list of items the children would need. She noticed there was only clothing on the list for the oldest girl. When she questioned me about other items she might like, or need, I shared with her the situation and the child's response. Nothing else needed to be said.

Later that day, Cayti arrived at our home with bags of items for the children. The little ones had some clothing and diapers, and necessities, but also each got some fun toys. They got a cuddly blanket and a stuffed animal too. Those blankets became their security and they held them and snuggled the animals through the nights. But what impressed me most is what Cayti had done for the oldest. Amongst all the other items, there were a few bags for her. As she was helping the children open their things and decided where to put them, she realized some of the bags were for her. She opened them, and what I saw happen to her was something I'm not sure I've ever witnessed before. She immediately felt SEEN. Cayti didn't buy her anything extravagant, but it was just right. Among other things, there was a cute little purse/backpack for her which had a hairbrush, some hair ties, lip gloss, and a small mirror and a journal with a fancy pen. She also had a bag with scented body wash, shampoo, and body lotions. There was a bracelet that said "I am strong enough" and a little book of positive affirmations for teens. Those items, hand picked for this specific child, in this specific situation could not have come with more love!

cont'd

She cried. She hugged Cayti like she didn't want to let go. It broke my heart that something so simple could touch a child instantly. She filled that journal with her thoughts and wishes, pouring out her thoughts onto the pages. She spent hours sharing her stories with that pen. She wore that bracelet for the whole year she stayed with me.

A few months later, when Cayti checked in on us and dropped off a couple of items that had been donated that she thought we might be able to use, she spent some time talking to the kids and playing with the little ones. The oldest one commented on a girl on the tv who had beautiful hair. She said she'd always wished she had pretty hair like the girl on tv.

Well, the look on Cayti's face was telling, and sure enough she showed up the next day with a gift certificate for a free hair appointment at a local salon. When we went for the haircut, the hairdresser loved her so much (and I think Cayti had shared that she was a foster child) she offered to throw in a beautiful red dye to her hair. I've never witnessed a Cinderella Moment before, but if there ever was one...

Another one of my emergency placements, a five-year-old boy, came to me severely neglected. He was malnourished, underweight, and terrified. He didn't speak for days. He had never had a bed of his own, let alone clean pajamas or a toy he could call his. But within 24 hours of his arrival, Seawolf Privateers was at my doorstep with a care package that brought tears to my eyes. A toddler bed, along with new clothes, shoes, hygiene items, a cuddly Paw Patrol blanket, and a snuggly teddy bear — all packed into a bag like it had been prepared just for him. That bear became his best friend. It gave him comfort when he couldn't trust anything else. That simple gift helped him sleep through the night for the first time in our home.

And just when we were starting to settle, more magic arrived — Easter baskets delivered to our door, with eggs hidden in our yard like a surprise from a secret pirate crew. His smile that morning was the first one I'd seen. For a child who had lived through so much sadness, that joy was priceless. And it came on a beautiful day when we celebrated the ultimate gift of love!

At Christmas, your team knocked it out of the park again, bags full of gifts wrapped with love. But the gift that touched me most was the book — “The Christmas Compass,” written by your own Lady Catherine, just for foster kids. We read it together on Christmas Eve, and we talked about how Santa would find him in his new home with me and that he didn't need to worry. I told him that me, God and the pirate krewe would always be there for him. We read it several times together, and when it ended, he looked up and whispered, “Santa will find me with the magic compass!”

That moment... it broke me in the best way. You see, Seawolf Privateers isn't just about pirates and presents. You are the people who show up. You make sure our kids feel important. You remind me that I'm not alone — that there's an entire crew of people who care, who understand, and who want to help these children heal.

cont'd

There were days I wanted to quit. Days I didn't think I could keep going. But I'd get a phone call or a text from Cayti checking on me and asking if I needed anything. Then I'd get an email announcing a fun event that was just around the corner and we had something exciting to look forward too.

I know this letter is long, and I could go on and on for pages and still never express to you the joy, relief, thankfulness, appreciation and honor that comes along with having you all as part of our support team.

Please know that when you support Seawolf Privateers, you're not just funding an organization — you're changing lives. You're meeting children in their darkest hour and shining a light of hope. You're wrapping them in love, in security, in pirate magic... and reminding them that they matter.

To the Seawolf krewe, I say Thank you, from the deepest part of my heart — for loving these children the way you do, for helping us foster parents do what we're called to do, and for reminding little hearts like these that the world can still be a kind place filled with love.

With endless gratitude,

A local foster mom.