

SATURDAY, APRIL 5

Those who are generous are blessed,
for they share their bread with the poor.

—Proverbs 22:9



In the dead of night, while their families slept peacefully and obliviously, nine women in Tennessee made pound cakes. They wanted to give back to the community, to offer gifts of kindness, to help others without any expectation of return.

They eavesdropped in grocery stores, listening for people who needed help, noting when someone had to put back bread or milk for lack of money. And they filled the cart and paid the tab. They drove through neighborhoods on hot nights and wrote down the addresses that had fans in the windows—a sign of no air conditioning. They left gifts on the porch, including a homemade pound cake and a note that said, “Somebody loves you.” If a utility bill needed paid, they sent money to the company, no questions asked.

Since the 1970s, this band of women has operated with stunning generosity—and stealth. Their good works became public a year ago, with a story that has been shared across the Internet.

When they first began, they wondered how they could fund their mission. They gave up sending shirts to dry cleaners and started clipping coupons, so they could splurge on behalf of others. Oh, they wished early on, if they only had a million dollars. More than thirty-five years later, the nine women have contributed nearly \$900,000 to spread happiness and compassion in their communities and beyond.

Those who are generous are blessed, indeed.

—**Richelle Thompson**