***THE MIRACLE SHOP***

I believe in Miracles. I believe in Santa Claus!

Four years ago, during the Holidays, a new venture took place at *Pleasant View Elementary* in Golden, CO. The idea was to create a “popup” store for financially struggling families. This “store” allowed parents the ability to shop for “new” and “quality” toys at garage sale prices. Meaning, parents pay what they can pay.

What happened? It was hugely successful. The adjusted pricing allowed a population of underserved adults to shop for children, find items they wouldn’t normally be able to afford, and importantly, it created dignity along the way. This wasn’t a handout, it was a varied shopping experience. Popularity grew, and it was evident this worked. They called it, “The Miracle Shop”.

One morning, 20 minutes before opening of the storefront, a parent we’ll call Jim was waiting outside, eager to see what he might purchase. A volunteer noticed Jim watching carefully as a few more toys were brought and set on display before the doors opened. The staff turned on the bright lights and cheery music; it was time to shop.

Jim was wearing a security uniform, on his way to his 2nd job. He nervously revealed a handful of change, explaining this is what he had. His wife had suffered a stroke eight months earlier, the security job was in addition to his regular job, it kept things going for now. The staff assured Jim he was welcome, handed him a large bag, and Jim proceeded to pick out toys for his family. He left with tears as he thanked everyone around.

“Alice” walked in next. A few months prior, Alice’s husband had been in a traffic accident. During an MRI check, doctors found a brain tumor. No longer able to work, Alice was fearful that without the *Miracle Shop*, there would be no toys for her family this year. Fortunately, this wasn’t the case. Alice and Jim were the first customers that day. The stories walked in one after another.

With the closure of Pleasant View Elementary School in 2017, the *Miracle Shop*, was invited to *Calvary Church*, located in downtown Golden. The central location was accessible to parents from Shelton, Welchester, Kyffin and Mitchell Schools, as well as children from Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). Nearly 400 children were served, almost twice as many as before. Toys were donated by Golden Rotary, the City of Golden, the Optimist Club, the Lions Club, the Golden Hotel, Bell Middle School, Devinny Elementary, Bradford Elementary, and Calvary Church. Every single toy was sold.

It’s 2018, and once again, The *Miracle Shop* is preparing for a season of miracles. As popularity has grown, so has the demand. New and quality merchandise for ages K-12 is needed. If you are wondering what to donate, it’s easy. If your child is asking Santa for a present, buy two, donate one. Somewhere nearby, a child will open and be so thrilled.

Donations can be left with members of Golden Rotary, who meet every Tuesday at 7:15 AM at the Club at Rolling Hills.

To quote Dr. Seuss…. And the Grinch, with his grinch-feet ice-cold in the snow, stood puzzling and puzzling: "How could it be so? It came without ribbons! It came without tags! It came without packages, boxes or bags!" And he puzzled three hours, till his puzzler was sore. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before! "Maybe Christmas," he thought, "doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas...perhaps...means a little bit more!" And what happened then? Well...in Whoville they say that the Grinch's small heart grew three sizes that day!

Happy Holidays!