

Treasures

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Client Crystal



Talk about new beginnings, my prior client Bryan Winchell is living his new beginning and can be an example to others.

When I first represented Bryan, he was a straight A student that received the Florida Bright Future scholarship and was accepted at every college he applied to. He was an athlete that excelled at soccer but also ran track and played football. All that changed on New Year's Eve 1997 when four of his best friends died in a vehicle accident in Oldsmar. Bryan shared that this crash made him very angry at the world and at God. He shares that he became very violent and was charged with aggravated battery and grand theft and served nine months in jail and 6 years of probation. One bright light was becoming a father to his son.

Sadly, in 2005, Bryan fractured his back and became a statistic of the opioid epidemic. His drug addiction contributed to more criminal acts. He lost his job and his family and was sentenced to a year in county jail, a drug rehab program, and 3 years 8 months

of probation. After serving time in jail, Bryan was released to the Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center and participated in the ARC Christian Retreat Camp to play sports and receive spiritual guidance.

Although Bryan conquered his drug addiction, he yearned for a renewed relationship with his son. After graduating the Salvation Army, Bryan was hired by them and subsequently worked hard to find more stable employment. Fortunately, Bryan recently secured a great job, but that was still not enough. He wanted to re-earn the trust of his family – especially his son.

Fortunately, through faith and hard work, Bryan was able to reestablish himself and his relationships. "My family trusts me and is proud of me," Bryan tells me. "I could not have done it without my Mom's (Lucie) love. She loved me enough to get me help." Bryan and his son now spend time together as they work on rebuilding that relationship. Also, Bryan recently proposed to his girlfriend on New Year's Eve – a treasured memory far better than the New Year's Eve car accident memory that has haunted him for years.

Bryan knows that this is just the beginning of a new chapter for him. He knows that there will be bumps and hurdles and temptations, but he promises to use this opportunity to make his life and the lives of others around him better.

We wish Bryan much success in his new beginning and hope others can find hope in his story. As a token of our pride of his accomplishments, we recently presented Bryan with a gift card so he can take his fiancé to dinner.

A Business Gem

Throughout December, my team and I collected sweaters (as part of our office Ugly Sweater Hall Decoration theme) to give to those in need. We were not sure who to donate the sweaters to until one of my clients told me about Clothes To Kids. Once she told us about this wonderful organization, we knew they were the ones to receive the sweaters.

Clothes to Kids was started by two childhood friends and graduates of Clearwater High School who wanted to provide a cheerful store environment where families and children could actually shop with dignity and respect and receive school clothing free of charge. Their first store was opened in 2003 and now they have stores in Clearwater, St. Petersburg and Tampa.

These two friends' vision to provide school children with free new and quality used clothing in a fun shopping environment has resulted in over 135,000 wardrobes being distributed to kids in our community. Each wardrobe contains five pairs of new socks, five pairs of new underwear, five tops, four bottoms (pants, shorts, and skirts), one dress, one jacket (in season), and one pair of shoes.

This great work cannot be done without donations. So, if you are beginning the new year by cleaning out your children's closets and drawers, think of Clothes To Kids. They accept kids clothes (size 4 - 16); adult size clothes (think pre-teen and teens); young women (size 0 - 22); young men (size 18 to 46); shoes (children's size 9 to adult); bras, belts, purses, hats, jewelry, backpacks; and NEW socks and underwear. Donations can be dropped off at any of our their locations from 9:00 - 4:00 each week day:

CLEARWATER STORE - 1059 North Hercules Ave, Clearwater, 33765

ST. PETE STORE - 2168 34th Street South, St. Petersburg, 33711

TAMPA STORE - 5011-H West Hillsborough Ave, Tampa, 33634

When my team and I toured the Clearwater store, we were impressed by how warm and inviting the atmosphere is and how nice everyone there was. Thank you Clothes To Kids for doing such a wonderful service to the kids in our community!



Dixie Dee's Diamond Advice

Old dogs may not be able to learn new tricks, but Dixie Dee know that her owner Lorrie has to learn new Florida laws that came into effect on January 1st.

Dixie Dee wants to remind all drivers that texting and driving is now a "primary" offense which allows police to pull over motorists for texting behind the wheel. The law also bars motorists from talking on cell phones in school and work zones, unless the motorists use "hands-free" electronic devices. Tickets issued for a first offense carry a \$30 fine plus court costs, which could reach \$108.16. The fine jumps to \$60 --- \$158.18 with court costs --- for a second violation within five years.

Also, although Dixie Dee does her tricks for free, another new law taking effect Jan. 1 increases the State's minimum wage from \$8.46 to \$8.56 an hour, with a

minimum wage of at least \$5.54 an hour for tipped employees.

Dixie Dee knows even she has better handwriting than some doctors. So, the new law requiring health care practitioners to generate and transmit all prescriptions electronically to pharmacies may give some relief to pharmacists frustrated by doctors' illegible handwritten prescriptions. Also, the new law allows for better tracking of prescription drugs and consistency in their processing.

Dixie Dee is amazed how often Lorrie comes home and tells stories how texting and driving resulted in a client getting hurt in a car accident. Maybe this new law is a beginning of reducing the number of car accidents caused by texting and driving so Dixie Dee can share her stories of the squirrels in the yard instead.



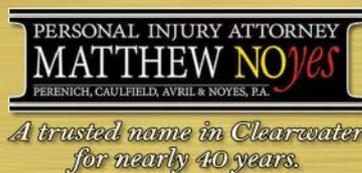
Community Chest



Each year, my family and I are blessed to be able to begin the holiday season by helping other families in our community starting during the Thanksgiving season. This year, in memory of our Mom (who would have turned 91 years old on November 28th), we gave away a Thanksgiving care package to 91 families in need of some Thanksgiving cheer. Each care package included all the fixings for a great Thanksgiving dinner including potatoes, stuffing, vegetables, yams, cranberries and even a turkey. In exchange, we asked the families to invite a neighbor or family member who otherwise would not have a Thanksgiving dinner over for dinner.

We have been doing this family event each year since our Mom passed away 16 years ago. It began with 75 families (as Mom would have been 75 years old the year she passed away) and has increased by one each year since.

My Mom believed in the adage, "No one person can help every person, but every person can help one person." Whether it is a smile, hug, or saying "I'm sorry," we encourage you to begin a daily habit of helping the treasures in your life in a small way.



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Jewel of a Joke

My son Jacob had an English teacher last year who was well known for being a fair, but hard, grader. One day last February, he received a B minus on a theme paper. In hopes of getting a better grade and in the spirit of the Valentine season, he sent her a box of chocolates with the pre-printed inscription "BE MINE." The following day, he received in return a valentine from the teacher that read: "Thank you, Jacob, but it is still a BE MINE-US." 

Focus on Community Riches

Happy New Year!! Thank you for taking time to read this edition of Treasures. I know the New Year brings new challenges so I truly appreciate you spending a few minutes to read about new beginnings.

New Year resolutions give us time to think of doing things better than last year. They give us a chance for new beginnings. Inside, you will read about a prior client of mine who has fought for new beginnings. Also, Dixie Dee tells us about laws and our Business Gem is about a company that gives needy kids a new beginnings. I hope you enjoy these articles.

As you think about your new beginning, I encourage you to listen to Chris Rice/Kathy Troccoli's song "Go Light Your World" and watch their music videos. The lyrics of the song include:

*Carry your candle, run to the darkness
Seek out the helpless, confused and torn
And hold out your candle for all to see it
Take your candle, and go light your world*

What I like about the song is that it reminds us that we all have candles – some lit and giving light while others hold their candle without a flame. It encourages us to provide light to those in need (to give others a chance at a new beginning), but it also gives hope to those in the darkness of sadness or despair that their candle can be lit by treasures around them.

Enjoy the treasures in your life and throughout the community! I encourage you to take the New Year's opportunity to be a beacon to those in need and an example to others!

Matt

Recipe Riches

St. Valentine's Day Parfaits

THE NEXT TREASURES DOES NOT COME OUT UNTIL AFTER ST. VALENTINE'S DAY SO I WANTED TO MAKE SURE YOU HAD AN EASY TREAT YOU CAN PREPARE ON ST. VALENTINE'S DAY! ENJOY!

INGREDIENTS

- Strawberry Instant Pudding
- Whipped Cream
- Conversation Heart Candies

DIRECTIONS

Place the conversation heart candies in a plastic bag and use a rolling pin to break them into smaller pieces. Mix them into the whipped cream.

Next, follow the directions on the package for the strawberry pudding and fill your mini dessert cups 1/3 of the way full with the pudding. Using a piping bag filled with the conversation heart whipped cream add a dollop on top of the pudding.

Pour another layer of pudding onto of the whipped cream and finally top with another dollop of whipped cream. Sprinkle with crushed conversation heart candies.

