

## **SB22, SUPPORT, ORAL, WRITTEN TESTIMONY – Roseann Newcomer**

My first exposure to the Johnson County Christmas Bureau was when I was 8 years old. My mom was unable to get a babysitter and took me with her to the Holiday SHOP. I got to pick out a brand-new coat. As the youngest of 3 girls, I had always had hand-me-down coats and clothes, and this was my first new coat. But it wasn't just a coat. It was a confidence booster.

Fast forward to about 25 years ago. I found myself a single mom working full-time but struggling to support 2 children, Alexandria & Lewis. When kids don't get a gift, they think they're on the naughty list; when all their friends get gifts and new clothes they begin to wonder if they are deserving as well. I wanted those things for my children, but they would not have been able to have them, without the blessings from Johnson County Christmas Bureau.

Love, confidence, acceptance – all of that is wrapped up in the gifts JCCB gives. I was a client and recipient of the Johnson County Christmas Bureau for a few years. For my children, it meant gifts and coats and they received some pretty cool gifts. But for me, the food was the huge blessing.

The Johnson County Christmas Bureau was a God send for me. I needed everything they gave me, and I was so grateful. In addition to the gifts for kids, the shoppers who accompany Holiday SHOP clients always tell them to select an adult gift as well. Usually, single moms don't receive a significant gift, other than a priceless craft project their children made at school- although those gifts are cherished a wrapped present is treasured too. I always wrapped my adult gift and put it under our tree so that I had a gift to open with my children. I can't tell you how valuable it was for me to come home with groceries, toys, coats, clothes, books, and even many personal care and hygiene items. It was such a blessing and gave me a sense of dignity.

Since that time, my circumstances have changed. I had thought many times about volunteering for JCCB. Through a series of circumstances, in 2021 I discovered that all it took to volunteer was to sign up on their website. So, I signed up to become a volunteer and hoped, in some way, through volunteering, to give back to others in need. I signed up for as many volunteer slots as possible to accompany clients as they shopped.

My husband and I have been looking for a way to bless the community and give back – especially since I had been a Johnson County Christmas Bureau recipient in my past. At one-point, last year, JCCB needed a refrigerator, and we had one to donate. I continued to look for other ways to give to the Johnson County Christmas Bureau with both funds and time. This year, I recently became a Board member.

The Johnson County Christmas Bureau serves the community, those in need, with so many essential items during the holiday and winter season. And there are thousands of people in need in Johnson County. Ironically, I lived across from Oak Park Mall when I was a client of the Johnson County Christmas Bureau. Now, this past year's Holiday SHOP was held in a building just across from Oak Park Mall. **I feel I've come full circle.**

SB22 would allow needed assistance to even more people, just like me and my children. Single moms, senior citizens, disabled, and veterans are all recipients of JCCB. They are our neighbors, and we could do even more and help even more, if this Senate Bill passes.  
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Roseann Newcomer  
JCCB Recipient  
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