

Why Olive Garden means Christmas to me



It was one year ago today. I went home to Longview, Texas to a mother who was worn out from her battle with cancer. As evening approached she got hungry and wanted Olive Garden. Nothing big just plain alfredo noodles. So, I headed to Olive Garden. Well everyone had



the same idea, as it was about the only place open on Christmas Eve. The order was placed, and it was a 2 hour wait for plain alfredo noodles. About 10 minutes into the wait the hostess at the bar came out with a bag, and gave me the order. I asked about the two hour wait--- She said your mother has come in here weekly for years and we know she is sick. I was amazed. I went to pay, and then she said “no need”, the kitchen staff covered it. Wow!!!

If you know me, you know the story doesn't stop here. The day after Christmas, I start the phone calls and emails. After regional, district and state contact I eventually make it to the VP level at corporate. Yes corporate---Darden Restaurants in Orlando Florida. I was able to tell the story and what it meant to me. Fast Forward 2 months, I was speaking at an Oncology conference in Orlando-----and I had a rental car. So, I drive to this big building after the conference---GPS says “you have arrived at Darden.” I go up to the door -- --I knew either they would let me in or security would escort me away. Turns out they let me in. I tell my story to the person at the front desk who thinks I am crazy. She starts calling people on the Olive Garden side and turns out someone knew my story. MICHELLE SANTILLI, Sr. Representative-Trainer. Not only did she know my story I had spoken with her. That day, I walked the halls of Darden and share the story over and over. I even shared it with the head Chef at Olive Garden. They said so many people only seek out to complain, but you did not, you brought a positive. This seemed strange, people seek corporate to complain.

This Christmas and this Season, think about what the small things mean to you and how far are you willing to go to recognize those that have done more. What is your legacy and impact.- www.legacybyimpact.com

My mother passed away two weeks later, but this story and the actions behind it have a great impact. You see it was not the alfredo it was the action. The stress was high and the place was packed and still the human spirit was strong. How far are you willing to go?

Email from Michelle this morning 12/24/18:

Hi Jordan, it's been a privilege meeting you and I wish I could have met your mother.

People like you and the stories you share with us about how we have influenced your life, are why 23 years with this company have been such a joy.

Quote at Darden Headquarters:

