

Receiving Blessings From Beyond the Grave

In the heart of El Reno, Oklahoma, a remarkable story of benevolence and unexpected blessings unfolded, all in the name of a woman named Diane Sweeney.

Sweeney's legacy, inspired by the benevolent teachings of Jesus, took an extraordinary form, touching the life of an unsuspecting teenager, Gabriella Bonham.

It all began when Sweeney, an Oklahoma City resident with a giving spirit, expressed her heartfelt wish to her nephew, Rick Ingram. She shared her desire that when she died, her beloved 2016 Volkswagen Beetle would find a new owner among those who attended her funeral.

Sweeney cherished a simple life, rooted in her Christian faith, family and her cherished Volkswagen Beetle. She believed in the power of benevolence and kindness, values that resonated deeply with her Christian faith.

Tragically, Sweeney's life was cut short on July 7, 2022. However, her wish did not go unheeded. About 30 days prior to her death, Ingram had promised his beloved aunt that her wish would come true.

After Sweeney's death, Ingram, along with his cousin, Suzanne Singleterry, decided to make her final wish a reality. They reached out to local news outlets, including Channel 4, to spread the word about her benevolent act.

"She always had a giving spirit," Ingram told Fox News Digital. "She told us of her wish. I remember it clear as day. I told her I would make it happen."

The response was overwhelming. One of the attendees at

Sweeney's funeral was 16-year-old Gabriella Bonham from El Reno. She had initially heard about the funeral on TV and found the idea of attending amusing. She gathered her older sisters and cousins to join her in this unique adventure.

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Little did Bonham know that this simple outing would turn into a deeply moving experience. As she sat among those who had known Sweeney, Bonham discovered the warmth, kindness and generosity that had defined Sweeney's life. Through family stories and heartwarming anecdotes, Bonham felt like she knew a stranger better than she ever could have imagined.

"It was very interesting to not know her and to see her life through her family's eyes," she told Fox News Digital.

At the end of the service, Bonham filled out a raffle ticket, as per Sweeney's wish, and went on with her life. However, more than a year passed before Bonham received a life-changing phone call. The estate had finally been settled, and the time had come to hold the raffle. Two trusted friends, Rudy Espinoza and Taylor Hurt, were entrusted with the tickets, and on Sept. 15, 2023, the drawing took place, facilitated by the staff of Resthaven Funeral Home in Oklahoma City.

The call Bonham received that day would change her life forever. She had been experiencing difficulties with her current car, making her daily life a struggle. When she received the news, she was overwhelmed with shock and gratitude. Her parents and family joined in her excitement as they realized Bonham had won Diane's cherished Volkswagen Beetle.

Ingram, who made that life-changing call, couldn't have been happier. He felt a deep sense of divine purpose, a belief that Sweeney's benevolent wish had been fulfilled. A young girl was

starting her life just as Sweeney's was coming to an end, continuing the legacy of kindness and compassion.

"The perfect winner was drawn," Ingram said.

As Bonham drove away in her new car, she felt the weight of responsibility and the gift of benevolence that Sweeney had passed on. The hope and prayer is that the spirit of Diane Sweeney—her generosity and commitment to others—will live on in Bonham. {eoa}

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