

This is Wayne

Wayne Appl is our fundraising outreach coordinator. He has become so much more than this. He is a mentor, a friend and a papa to my 9-month-old daughter. I like to joke with him telling him his favorite people are the baby and his dog. Of course, I know this is not true. We laugh about it though. Wayne is always there with sound advice and a heart to help the people who come through the doors at A Ray of Hope. I know this man has a rough exterior but inside he is just a big teddy bear. It took me a while to learn that I could trust him. He never pushed he just let me and others take the time to get to know him. I know when I am struggling with something I can go to him and speak my mind and he will listen. He always helps me to either understand or to realize its not going to be worth much tomorrow to be so worried or stressed out.

Wayne has become a papa to my daughter Brandi. He lights up when she is around him. The big old grumpy bear has a soft spot for her. They play together quiet often and he even gives her dance lessons. Basically, he puts on a song and helps her groove to the beat. When she was first using her walker, he would roll around in his chair and show her how its done. The things Wayne does for this organization and the people who come here is amazing and I don't think can be summed up in this one article. He does a lot behind the scenes that most people don't realize. I personally don't have a full grasp on what it is that he does. I do know that he spends a lot of time helping others to be successful.

I call him the old man and he always responds with "at least I know I am going to make it this far". Wayne has a great sense of humor and always helps to keep the mood light. He has also become an awesome member to the staff here at A Ray of Hope. I don't think I could imagine this place without him. He makes this place fun and he helps to remind all of us about integrity and accountability. He keeps us always thinking ahead. He is like a dad to me at this point, no I have never told him this. I find myself wanting to tell him my good news first. He gives me the dad smile and it makes me feel like I can do anything. I have a great dad in Washington don't get me wrong, but its nice to have a someone like Wayne around. I am so completely grateful that God sent this man to A Ray of Hope!!

By Christina Vachal

RJ

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those weeks that turned into one of those months. I have been struggling to keep setting a good example and not be overly judgmental, I can't tell you how many conversations I have been having with Jesus lately. Today though I think I got answers to questions I didn't remember asking. RJ Christensen happened to stop by with his fluffy pup Buddy. I was in the office answering phones and trying to catch up on homework when I saw him talking with my husband on the cameras. Something urged me to go into the kitchen just to hear what he was saying. He has such a way with words I cannot honestly type them here for you. I was craving answers to how to help people better, how to set a better example and why I have been led here. The love in the words that RJ spoke reminded me that I am here to help people relearn everyday things and to do it with love. To do it with love not resentment, not out of expectation. We are all broken from one thing or another and we do not need someone's resentment or overly high expectations. We need understanding and for someone to show us there is hope to be had. RJ reminded me and my husband that we are here because we have the heart to help and the heart to love these people.

I at first was filled with shame because I had forgotten this. Then I had this overwhelming sense of thankfulness. I don't know RJ very well, and sometimes he just seems like a big grump. Today I had the pleasure of experiencing the love that he has for A Ray of Hope, his desire to see this place succeed. He did not demand he spoke with wisdom and love. He opened my eyes to see a bigger chunk of God's plan for my life. This advice was pointed at how to do things here better, but it is for all aspects of life. We must remember that we are to love one another the way God loves us. There has been no better example for me that I can think of than today listening to RJ Christensen in the kitchen. Its all about love and bringing more people to God. The day to day struggles are not what we should focus on. I know that God sent RJ here today probably for more than just the conversation he had with my husband Joe, but it changed my whole outlook. It has reminded me to love!

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