

Good Shepherd Institute for Mission
The Lost Sheep
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My husband and I were married in 2015 and purchased our first house last spring. It didn't take us long to settle in and turn the house into our home. This past Christmas was the first time we were hosting a holiday celebration for family, and it was something we had been looking forward to for months.

December 22nd was the last day of work before my holiday vacation began. I only worked for a few hours so that I could make some last-minute preparations. In the short amount of time that my husband left for work and I returned from work, someone broke into our home and went through every room, upending our furniture, ransacking our dressers and cabinets, and stealing multiple items along with all but two Christmas gifts from underneath the tree.

After some of the dust settled, it became clear that I'd interrupted the burglar in the act. We are very lucky that no one was hurt and nothing was irreparably damaged. As we told many people, it was just stuff – nothing that couldn't be replaced.

The suspect linked to our burglary has been arrested and is in custody. Given how much information is at your fingertips online, we have learned a lot about him. He has been involved in various petty and more serious crimes over the past decade and was recently released from prison after serving five years for burglary. Since he was caught in the act of burglarizing someone else's home and linked to approximately a dozen other break-ins, it looks as if he will be going back to prison again.

He must know as much about my husband and I as we know about him. It doesn't take anyone longer than a few minutes of looking around our place to understand what matters to us and what kind of people we are. The same thing applies to GSS. The feeling is palpable when you set foot in our building: our students are what matter, and we the kind of people that will change their lives for the better. That was one of the reasons I started working here so many years ago.

Not even an hour after I told one of my co-workers what had happened, word got around fast. An online fundraiser was started and the local news channels were alerted about the "real-life Grinch" that ruined our Christmas.

Thanks to those who started the fundraiser and everyone that donated money, we were able to raise the funds needed to pay our insurance deductible. We received an outpouring of support from co-workers, neighbors, and even strangers after they saw our story on the news. People we'd never met before stopped by with food and wished us well. We will never be able to express how grateful we are to everyone.

Every day my mind goes back to the “lost sheep” – the man who broke into our home. I can’t help but wonder how different his life could have been had he received treatment in a program like GSS. What if he had received the same love and support that I’ve seen GSS staff offer every day to our students and each other? Would he have stood a better chance at having a better life?

I, for one, truly believe that he would have.

In the past few months, we’ve had many people argue against GSS and try to invalidate the good work that we’ve done for the past 153 years. Now that we’re closing the doors on our program in a few short weeks, I keep thinking of all the children we won’t be able to help. No one wins and everyone loses.

That said, the battle is not over: "Go after the lost sheep without other rest than the cross, other consolation than work, other thirst than for justice." - St. Mary Euphrasia

I’ll be there when our new program, whatever it may be, reopens. I hope that you will be there too.